

King attends Isra' and Mi'raj celebrations

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday attended a large celebration marking the Isra' and Mi'raj anniversary (Prophet Mohammad's nocturnal journey to the seven heavens.) The celebration which was organised by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs was held at the Conference Hall in the King Abdullah Mosque. Several speeches were delivered on this holy occasion. Also attending the celebrations were Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Speaker of the Senate Zeid Rifai, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, senior civil and military officials.

Tabloids get revenge on 'Womanizing' Earl Spencer

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's tabloid newspapers have given a public tongue-lashing to the Prince of Wales, who had been the subject of headlines on his alleged affair with 12 women. The Mirror's front-page 31, are battling over who their multi-million pound divorce should be based on. Newspapers gave their coverage of claims made by Charles Spencer had a year of affairs that began with his wife, the 31-year-old Spencer, and his wife, who he had a divorce from, while he was having a bath, and that he allegedly confessed to his mistress that he was "cruel and bullying" to his wife. A spokesman for Spencer said all the allegations were denied and would be answered later.

Even yaks not exempt from red tape

PARIS (AFP) — It can't film yaks in the Himalayas, the French government has decided. The ban is part of a new law on the protection of the environment. The law says that any animal that is endangered must be protected. The yak is one of the most endangered animals in the world. The French government has decided that it is not allowed to film yaks in the Himalayas. The ban is part of a new law on the protection of the environment. The law says that any animal that is endangered must be protected. The yak is one of the most endangered animals in the world.

French butchers have had enough of butchery

PARIS (AFP) — French butchers are fed up with being blamed for the deaths of the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris. They have decided to go on strike. The butchers' union has announced that they will go on strike on Wednesday. They are protesting against the blame that is being placed on them for the deaths of the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris.

James Bond saves the world with mobile phone

LONDON (AFP) — James Bond has saved the world with his mobile phone. He has used it to call the police and to warn the world of a terrorist attack. The movie "The World Is Not Enough" is based on this story. James Bond is a fictional character created by Ian Fleming. He is a secret agent who saves the world from various threats. In this movie, he uses his mobile phone to save the world from a terrorist attack.

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Iraq invites experts, diplomats to inspect presidential palaces

UAE emir calls for acceptance of Iraqi president as 'faithful brother' again

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQI PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein on Wednesday invited U.N. experts and diplomats to visit his palaces to make sure he is not hiding any weapons of mass destruction. The official Iraqi news agency said the Revolution Command Council, which is chaired by President Hussein, and the ruling Baath Party decided in a meeting Wednesday to invite two representatives of countries that are involved in the inspection of Iraqi weapons and five experts or diplomats from the countries of the Security Council to visit the palaces "for a period of one week or more, or for a month, so that they can find out the truth," said a statement by the Revolution Command Council.

Iraq said on Wednesday it would not put up with any more "farces" by U.N. arms inspectors, whom it again accused of spying for the United States. The comments were the latest in a war of words between Baghdad and Washington that has shown no signs of dying down despite Iraq's decision last week to lift its ban on American working in U.N. monitoring teams.

The ban caused a tense stand-off with the U.N. and prompted a major U.S. military build-up in the Gulf. Baghdad agreed to reverse its Oct. 29 decision after mediation by Russia.

The government newspaper Al-Jumhuriya said Iraq will not tolerate any more farces by inspection teams, which it said had developed into virtual criminal courts.

But at the same time the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) said 13 groups of monitors headed by road on Wednesday for inspection sites, and one team used a helicopter for surveillance outside Baghdad.

Iraqi officials later said 19 sites were inspected and no banned weapons were found. "The work of the inspection teams has changed from searching for weapons to gathering information about Iraq which has nothing to do with U.N. Security Council resolutions," Al-Jumhuriya said.

Al-Thawra newspaper of the ruling Baath Party, said Washington was insisting on President Saddam Hussein's palaces to divert world attention from Iraq's great and national cause, which is lifting the embargo imposed by the U.N. when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

In a sign that Baghdad may be gaining ground in its campaign to tip world opinion in its favour, the president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) made his strongest bid yet to re-admit Iraq into Arab ranks. "Saddam Hussein is not stronger than others and what emanated from him was a result of greed not only in Kuwait but in the whole Gulf," UAE newspapers quoted Sheikh Zaid Bin Sultan Al-Nahayan as telling Egyptian editors in Cairo on Tuesday.

"But greed is part of the nature of humans young and old, and if greed had dominated the Iraqi President's mind, the Gulf is now well and it is Saddam and his people who are suffering."

"Let's tell this man that you have erred towards us... but we now tell you: 'welcome back as a faithful brother,'" he said.

The UAE was part of the U.S.-led coalition that drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait in 1991. But the Gulf state has since led a campaign to return Iraq to the Arab fold.

Sheikh Zaid's comments were the most explicit call yet for rehabilitating the Iraqi leader. In the past, he has called for forgiving Iraq without mentioning President Hussein by name.

There is widespread opposition even among Washington's Gulf war allies to using force in the stand-off, viewed as a test of the U.N.'s ability to act effectively as world policeman.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahaf said on Tuesday that his government would "throw out" any inspectors who tried to enter President Hussein's palaces, even if it provoked a U.S. military response.

Earlier, U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen accused Iraq of continuing to evade and deceive inspectors. Mr. Cohen also said Iraq might have developed enough VX chemical agent alone to kill every person on earth, and that President Hussein must not be allowed to exempt his palaces from searches.

Mr. Cohen stressed at a news conference that any attack on Iraq by U.S. planes and ships massed in the Gulf would be reserved "only as a last option" by President Bill Clinton in consultation with Washington's allies.

Iraqi newspapers quoted Lieutenant-General Amir Al-Saadi, an adviser to President Hussein in charge of following up the work of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on weapons inspections, as saying:

"It is an unscientific and naive exaggeration which aims at instigating a hysterical campaign against Iraq."

"Iraq has not produced and does not possess even one gramme of the nerve gas and this fact is documented by UNSCOM."

Russia, which with the U.S., Britain, France and China is a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, has called for restraint to help build on diplomatic successes achieved so far.

Iraq said on Tuesday it wanted to set a time frame for the work of UNSCOM, responsible for dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction under terms of the Gulf war ceasefire.

Under Mr. Netanyahu's plan, widely reported in Israeli media, Israeli troops would withdraw from 6 per cent to 8 per cent of the West Bank — but only in several months, after the Palestinians make a stronger effort to fight terrorism.

Channel 2 TV broadcast a map showing the redeployment would enlarge the Palestinian enclave in the Hebron area and create a large bloc encompassing both the cities of Jenin and Nablus in the north of the territory — and isolating several Jewish settlements.

In an interview with CNN, Mr. Netanyahu admitted his plan foresees Israel skipping an additional pullback to which it had committed itself, with the two sides instead beginning talks on a permanent peace agreement.

"We would engage in one additional redeployment and at the same time embark on rapid negotiations for a final peace agreement," he said. "With goodwill on both sides it's possible to advance this process."

The Palestinians, however, have been seeking a far larger pullback and say they will not agree to forgo any of the three withdrawal stages which Israel was to have completed by mid-1998. Also, they have been reluctant to enter final status talks, fearing Mr. Netanyahu would never upgrade their autonomy to a full state.

Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party has traditionally opposed a Palestinian state and favoured retaining some form of Israeli control in the West Bank, because of its strategic value and historical resonance for the Jews. But that position appears to be weakening.

Netanyahu pullout plan divides his coalition

Both sides to coalition vow to topple government if decision goes other way

Levy says will resign if Netanyahu does not move peace forward

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed Wednesday to win the quick cabinet approval he sought for a West Bank troop pullback which he hopes will appease Palestinians, Americans and coalition allies demanding progress in peace talks.

The proposal, to be voted on next week, is ideologically wrenching for Netanyahu's conservative government, many of whose members are deeply committed to Israeli control of the West Bank.

But at the same time, it apparently falls far short of Palestinian and U.S. expectations. Israeli media speculated Wednesday that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat would in any case reject the proposal in hopes the Netanyahu government — which is wracked by internal infighting and ideological dispute — might collapse.

Even the limited pullout plan sparked threats from right-wing coalition allies to bring Mr. Netanyahu down.

"In light of such proposals, we clearly want to topple him," Michael Kleiner, head of the Land of Israel Front, an alliance of 17 hawkish lawmakers, told the Associated Press (AP). Mr. Netanyahu's coalition controls 66 seats in the 120-member parliament.

Some believe the hardliners will eventually back down for fear of bringing the dovish Labour Party back to power, however.

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On Wednesday, coalition whip Meir Shitreet said a Palestinian state would be "in keeping with the interests" of Israel.

In recent comments Mr. Netanyahu himself has suggested the important thing is not what a future Palestinian entity is called, but whether it will have powers to threaten Israel.

And at Wednesday's cabinet meeting, Channel 2 said, the hawkish Ariel Sharon urged his colleagues to "stop fooling ourselves" the Palestinian state is being created before our eyes.

At the cabinet meeting, which lasted for nearly six hours, Mr. Netanyahu discussed only the general outlines of his proposal, not the actual scope of withdrawal, he said.

The discussion was to resume on Sunday, with ministers expected to vote on the proposal then. The Maariv daily said Mr. Netanyahu could, only count on the full support of seven of 18 ministers.

Mr. Netanyahu also faces a rebellion if the withdrawal does not take place. Foreign Minister Levy said Wednesday he would quit "if the government does not do what it is required to do, and does not move forward with the peace process." And the

centrist Third Way Party has given January as a deadline for Mr. Netanyahu to authorise a troop pullback.

Together, Mr. Levy and the Third Way coalition eight seats in parliament, enough to bring down the coalition.

The U.S.-brokered agreement does not specify how much land Israel is to hand over in each stage, but says that by the end of the pullback it should have withdrawn to "defined military locations."

The Palestinians interpret this to mean that by mid-1998 they should control more than 90 per cent of the West Bank, with Israeli troops only remaining in Jewish settlements and army bases.

Mr. Netanyahu has been under pressure from the United States to begin the troop pullback, and Haaretz said U.S. officials want troops to redeploy by December, with Israel handing over at least 15 per cent of the West Bank at that time.

Army Radio said Mr. Netanyahu spoke to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the phone Tuesday to present his proposal.

Kurdish factions in northern Iraq blame each other for attacks

ANKARA (R) — A U.S.-brokered ceasefire between Iraq's feuding Kurds looked increasingly shaky on Wednesday as two opposing groups blamed each other for fresh fighting in northern Iraq.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Masoud Barzani said its Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) foes had attacked it at the village of Warte around 12 hours after Mr. Barzani's group announced the ceasefire unilaterally on Monday.

"They attacked Warte and killed four Peshmerga [fighters]," the KDP's Ankara representative Safen Dizayee told Reuters. "For them, there is no ceasefire," he said.

PUK officials said on Tuesday they had accepted the ceasefire, but diplomats close to the Kurdish peace process said the group had so far not confirmed its compliance in writing.

Iraq's Kurds have been fighting for control of the north for the last three years. The region has been out of Baghdad's control since after the 1991 Gulf war and is protected from any Iraqi government attacks by U.S. and British air patrols.

The PUK, led by Jalal Talebani, on Tuesday accused Mr. Barzani's forces of shelling its positions near the ceasefire line.

Bomb kills 4 in Algeria — press

ALGIERS (AFP) — The explosion of a bomb in eastern Algeria has killed four people and wounded several others, press reports said Wednesday.

The Liberte newspaper said the bomb exploded at Touabla, near Jijel, 300 kilometres east of Algiers on Tuesday.

The paper did not give details of the attack but speculated that the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), an Islamist group operating in the north African country, could have called off a ceasefire, the first since the outbreak of the Algerian civil war five years ago.

Madani Mezrag, leader of the armed wing of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), announced the "unilateral cease-fire" in late September and called on other groups to join it.

The cease-fire came into force a few days later. Since then massacres have taken place but were blamed by Algerian security forces on the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) which is considered responsible for some of the most horrific atrocities carried out in Algeria over the past two years.

Liberte said that security forces on Tuesday discovered a bomb and a homemade mortar in Bainem forest near Algiers.

Sanctions hit children in Iraq, not military

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

BAGHDAD — The U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait did not only target the military capability of the country, but the children leading to increased deaths among them.

"Nothing is more painful for a doctor to stand helpless to treat a patient or ease his pains. Nothing is more painful than standing motionless before a small child who suffers from blood cancer and is unable to do anything to help him," said Samir Qalandar, director of Saddam Hospital in Baghdad.

The hospital, mainly specialised in treating children, is one of ten similar institutions in the Iraqi capital and nearby cities and provinces.

Dr. Qalandar said the government-run hospital, which was opened in 1986, was receiving more than 180 cases a day, six times its actual capacity.

"We face difficulties because of the daily influx of patients. Due to the sanctions, the government's ability to launch new hospitals is zero and we are not able to treat them all," he told the Jordan Times.


He said the hospital, like other Iraqi hospitals, suffered from a shortage of medical supplies, especially antibiotics, medicine to treat cancer, X-ray and lab equipment.



Saadoun Hamudi, right, speaker of Iraqi parliament and Iraq's health minister, second from right, saying prayers over the bodies of five Iraqi dead children at the Saddam Hospital for children in Baghdad on Wednesday. They died because of shortages of medicine due to the imposed sanctions on Iraq since 1990 (AP photo)

Iraqi children are threatened by malnutrition. He noted that, due to sanctions the government has only been able to supply about half the amount of milk needed per child.

Every week more than 18 children die in Saddam Hospital alone, he said.



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Arab Bank is honoured to convey to

HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN

and to

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France says action needed to revive Mideast peace

CAIRO (R) — France's foreign minister said after talks with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak on Wednesday that action was needed to revive Middle East peacemaking.

Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine told reporters after a meeting with President Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Musa that they discussed ways to salvage peace efforts in the region.

"It is certain that the peace process cannot be resumed and become substantial without significant measures," he said.

"All those who think that only a peace process can produce a political solution based on commitments, and which can satisfy every-

one's legitimate demands and guarantee security for all, all those people are worried," he added.

Mr. Musa said the talks with Mr. Vedrine had also covered the Iraqi crisis, but had focused on Middle East peace.

"We discussed the gravity and the danger which the peace process is in, and the fact that it is in crisis, especially in light of suggestions that are not serious," he said.

Mr. Musa did not say what he had in mind, but Israel's cabinet was due to meet on Wednesday to discuss reported proposals for a new pullback from the occupied West Bank.

Israeli media reports have

said the cabinet would be asked to agree to withdraw Israeli troops from another six to eight per cent of the West Bank in return for Palestinian concessions.

A Palestinian official said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had telephoned Palestinian President Yasser Arafat overnight. Israeli media said the Israeli prime minister laid out his proposal for President Arafat, who was reported to have rejected it.

Israel Radio said the plan included implementation of a two per cent withdrawal which the Palestinians rejected last March as insignificant. It also required Palestinians to forgo a promised third pull-

back while the two sides raced to reach agreement on the final status of the West Bank and the Gaza strip.

"This is not seriousness. They are not serious," said Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath.

Mr. Vedrine, who has already visited Israel and Palestinian self-rule areas on his first Middle East tour since taking office in June, was due to have talks later on Wednesday with Esmat Abdul Meguid, secretary-general of the Arab League.

France sees Egypt as a key partner in Middle East peace efforts. Egypt, along with other Arab countries, has frequently called for a more active European role in the quest for peace.



13 KILLED IN TURKEY: Rescue workers try to save passengers stuck in a bus and a minibus that collided head-on Tuesday evening near Denizli, in western Turkey. 13 people, including seven Germans, were killed in accident and 41 others were injured (AP photo)

Southern Sudan governors to be elected next week

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan's recently formed legislative councils will meet next month in their state capitals to elect their speakers and other parliamentary leaders, a former rebel leader announced Wednesday.

Riek Machar, who heads the South Sudan Coordination Council and has cut a peace deal with the Islamist-backed military junta in Khartoum, said in a press statement that each of the 10 councils will elect a governor for its state.

Candidates have been nominated by Mr. Machar and endorsed by President Omar al-Bashir in decrees he issued on Tuesday.

Each state will have three candidates for the governorship office.

The most outstanding candidate is Lam Akol, another former rebel leader, who is contesting in his home Upper Nile state. Both men have broken with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of Colonel John Garang.

Col. Garang's movement took up the struggle against successive Khartoum regimes in 1983 to end domination of the mainly animist and Christian south of Sudan by the Arabised, Muslim north.

Peace talks between the SPLA and Khartoum, sponsored by the regional inter-governmental Authority on Development, broke up earlier this month with delegations from both sides set to consult with their leaders

and meet again in April next year.

Col. Garang arrived in Khartoum and stressed that his movement did not want to see the break-up of Sudan.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has repeatedly voiced his opposition to any attempt to divide Sudan, Africa's biggest nation. Both Cairo and Asmara, the Eritrean capital, host Sudanese political opposition figures.

Farouq Abu Al Issa, spokesman for the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA), told AFP that Col. Garang was in Cairo for a week, during which he would hold talks with Egyptian officials, SPLA and opposition leaders.

Contacts were under way for Col. Garang to visit other Arab countries to discuss his goal of achieving a separation of state and religion and self-determination for south Sudan. Mr. Abu Al Issa said.

Meanwhile, in Khartoum, the first meetings of a national constitutional commission have registered very poor attendance with only one-fifth of its members were present at Tuesday's session.

Chaired by former chief justice Khalafallah Rashid, the 500-strong commission is to submit its draft by the end of next December to General Bashir, who is to present it to the national assembly (parliament) for debate prior to presenting the document to a universal suffrage next year.

Iranian navy to build three destroyers, one submarine

TEHRAN (R) — The Iranian navy is to build three multi-purpose destroyers and also plans to build a small submarine, the official news agency IRNA said on Wednesday.

In a delayed report from the navy's home port of Bandar Abbas, it quoted Rear Admiral Mohammad Karim Tavakoli as telling reporters on Tuesday that design work had been completed and manufacturing of the destroyers would begin soon.

Adm. Tavakoli, commander of the navy's first zone based at Bandar Abbas, said the destroyers would be used on support and defence missions.

The International Institute

for Strategic Studies lists only one destroyer in the Iranian fleet, a U.S.-built vessel acquired before the 1979 Islamic revolution.

IRNA quoted Adm. Tavakoli as saying building the destroyers itself would save Iran up to five times the foreign exchange needed to buy them abroad.

He added that building a small submarine in the zone was among the navy's future programmes. Iran now has three Russian-built Kilo Class diesel submarines.

Adm. Tavakoli said the U.S. currently had two aircraft carriers, one helicopter carrier, five submarines and 25 destroyers in the Gulf.

Iraq blasts Butler as 'mad dog,' warns inspectors

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq branded chief U.N. arms inspector, Richard Butler, a "mad dog" and warned his teams about their work methods on Wednesday, in the first such attack since inspections resumed last week.

While the inspections went unhindered for a fifth straight day, a senior Iraqi official accused Washington of trying to whip up "hysteria" with false allegations that Baghdad could have enough VX nerve gas to destroy the planet.

"The mad dog Butler is expected next week in Baghdad," said the newspaper Babel, which is run by President Saddam Hussein's son Uday, as Iraq went back on the offensive against arms inspectors.

It made the same comment on each reference to the Australian chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of disarming Iraq.

Mr. Butler, an Australian diplomat, plans to meet Deputy Premier Tariq Aziz to discuss an informal agreement governing inspections of sensitive

sites, dating to June 1996. He has dismissed Iraqi assurances that it no longer has any weapons of mass destruction as "a very substantial lie," and threatened to cancel the agreement reached between his predecessor, Rolf Ekeus, and Mr. Aziz.

The official newspaper Al Jumhuriya, meanwhile, warned Iraq could halt its cooperation with UNSCOM.

"Cooperation between Iraq and the Special Commission will be neither transparent nor fruitful if the inspection teams don't

stop being used to harm Iraq and serve U.S. policy objectives," it said.

"The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, must realise that Iraq will no longer allow the comedy of the inspection teams, which are more like inquisitions, to repeat itself," it said.

Al Jumhuriya said that some inspectors had been behaving "in a haughty manner and giving orders" to their Iraqi counterparts, as if they were policemen rather than scientists (see story on page 1).

Palestinian exhibition depicts uprising, but no peace process

By Hisham Abdullah
Agence France Presse

NABLUS — A new exhibition here revives memories of the Palestinian intifada with hundreds of photos from the seven-year uprising against Israeli occupation — but not a single mention of President Yasser Arafat and the Oslo peace process.

The Islamist students who organised the exhibition in the West Bank town of Nablus' Najah University say they hope it brings back the uprising and make no excuses about excluding the past four years of negotiations with Israel.

The exhibit, titled "Story of Resistance," shows "the intifada is alive and that it represented too great a sacrifice to be rewarded by the meagre results of the Oslo

accords," Munzer Mishaqi, one of the organisers, told AFP.

The show, which began Saturday and lasts a week, is an unprecedentedly thorough examination of the 1987-94 intifada, the first grassroots revolt by the Palestinians against Israeli occupation and a landmark in their struggle for independence.

Thousands of photographs are on display, depicting scenes common from the intifada, particularly the "Children of the Stones," youths who were at the forefront of protests, burning tires and throwing stones at Israeli soldiers.

Pictures also show the Israeli retribution: Youths shot by soldiers or with hands and legs broken by soldiers, and Palestinian

houses blown up. More than 1,000 Palestinians were killed during the uprising, along with tens of thousands of injured.

The pictures show participation by all Palestinian factions, including youth from Mr. Arafat's leading Fatah faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). But leaders of Islamist factions, including the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), have the most prominence.

There is even a photo of Hassan Al Banna, an Egyptian who founded the Muslim Brotherhood, from which Hamas emerged during the intifada, but who died 30 years before the intifada took place.

There is, however, no photo of Mr. Arafat, PLO, in exile in Tunis at the time,

was caught off guard by the eruption of the intifada, and the creation of his Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1994 under the peace process begun in Oslo marked the end of the uprising.

The exhibition, meanwhile, depicts the intifada as continuing. Photos of stonethrowing youths blend into pictures of suicide bombings by Hamas and Islamic Jihad after 1994 which left scores of Israelis dead.

Alongside tape recordings of songs and slogans chanted by protesters, there is a display of "weapons" from both sides. Stones, slingshots, the checkered "keffiyeh" scarf worn as a mask, even the cans of spray paint used to paint slogans and messages on walls.

From the Israeli side, there are replicas of automatic rifles, bullets, tear-gas canisters and an Israeli soldier's uniform and helmet.

There is also a model of a prison tower and full-scale mock cells from Israel's Megiddo prison to commemorate the 100,000 Palestinians thought to have been imprisoned at one time or another during the intifada.

The exhibition also marks several massacres of Palestinian civilians by Israelis in Rishon Letzion near Tel Aviv and at Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque in 1990 and in Hebron's Cave of the Patriarchs in 1994.

For visitors, the scenes of the intifada seemed all too contemporary, especially with hope failing in the deadlocked peace process

and widespread disappointment with the self-rule authority.

"I still remember when I was 10 years old and I saw my neighbour shot dead by an Israeli soldier right before my eyes," said May Zakarnah, 18.

"Nothing has changed for us. We're still being cut down by Israeli bullets. There's no solution except for the Israelis to leave our land," said a student, Youssef Al Dik, 22.

The exhibition also shows oppression by PNA. Photos depict the storming of Najah University by police in March 1996 and the body of a Palestinian tortured to death by self-rule security forces.

"We could not leave that out," said Mr. Mishaqi.

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19 PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes

14:10 New Kids on the Block
14:30 My Little Fairy Tale
15:00 America's Funniest People
15:30 He Shoots, He Scores
16:00 National Geographic
16:30 The Boy From Andromeda
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:15 French Programmes
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Trivial Pursuit
20:00 Parenthood
20:30 Lois and Clark — Superman
21:10 Oprah Winfrey Show
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature Film: "Final Roll of the Dice"
23:59 Music Show

Friday Programmes

14:10 The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin
14:30 Fred and Barney
15:00 Wishbone
15:30 Lucky Luke
16:00 Family Matters
16:20 Doc — Natural Wonders of Europe
17:00 French Programmes
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Doc — Life on the Internet
20:00 Comedy — Are You Being Served
20:30 Brisco County
21:10 The History Makers
22:00 News in English
22:30 Mini-series
23:30 Daddy's Girls

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES

04:48 Fajr
06:10 (Sunrise) Duha
11:23 Dhuhur
14:13 'Asr
16:37 Maghreb
17:58 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of showers in the southern and eastern regions of the Kingdom, and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 10/19
Aqaba 16/26
Deserts 06/22
Jordan Valley 15/26

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 18, Aqaba 24
Humidity readings: Amman 55 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Youssef Naser 751144
Dr. Khalidoun Klob 816715
Dr. Nidal Asad 751872
Dr. Issam Asmar 744685
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy 626722
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmelsani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Nabil Saffarini 901323
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Shmelsani Hospital 669131
Khalidi Maternity 64281/6
Akhil Maternity 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmelsani 607071
Shmelsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital

(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00 Sanaa (RJ)
08:25 Bombay (RJ)
09:15 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:15 Colombo (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
18:05 Kuwait (RJ)
18:05 Athens (RJ)
18:55 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:05 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
19:45 Moscow (RJ)
21:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
22:50 Larnaca (RJ)

Other Flights
13:15 Riyadh (SV)
14:10 Sharjah (AH)
15:00 Doha (QR)
15:20 Muscat, Doha (GF)
16:00 Dubai (EK)
16:30 Rome (AZ)
20:00 Tel Aviv (MS)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
23:35 Larnaca (CY)

DEPARTURES

Royal Wings (RW)
(For Thursday and Friday)
07:45 Aqaba (RW)
09:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
09:40 Moscow (RJ)

10:30 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
11:30 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:05 Kuwait (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:20 Athens (RJ)
16:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
19:35 Larnaca (RJ)
20:10 Cairo (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
23:00 Jakarta (RJ)
23:59 Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
02:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
00:35 Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Athens (OA)
06:40 Beirut, London (BA)
08:00 Beirut (ME)
14:45 Riyadh (SV)
15:00 Algiers (AH)
15:55 Doha (QR)
16:20 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
17:00 Muscat, Dubai (EK)
17:30 Rome (AZ)
21:20 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)

ROYAL WINGS

(For Thursday and Friday)
06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15 Aqaba (RW)
09:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
16:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55 Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 Aqaba (RW)



Prince Rashid graduates from military academy

LONDON (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Rashid Wednesday graduated from the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst after completing an intensive commissioning course.

Prince Rashid was the only non-British officer among the 55 graduates who attended the training course.

Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath attended the graduation ceremony of Prince Rashid, who will continue his military training through active service as a second lieutenant in



the British military along with the other graduates, Prince Rashid, who will

pursue his academic education at Cambridge University, had graduated from Harrow and obtained eight GCSE at ordinary levels and passed the advanced level examinations in history, political science, classical civilisation, and Arabic.

Prince Rashid has taken part in several military training courses in the Jordan Armed Forces, including obtaining his paratrooper wings.

A Royal Decree was issued Wednesday appointing Prince Rashid as a lieutenant in the Jordan Armed Forces.

Students continue strike for second day to protest administrative policy

By Yousef Rafia'h
Special to the Jordan Times

ZARQA — Students from the Amman Polytechnic Faculty, a subsidiary of Balqa Applied Sciences University, Wednesday continued their open strike for the second consecutive day to protest what they termed as the administration's procrastination in responding to their requests for improved services, study plans, and the endorsement of a constitution for the student body.

Khalid Abu Farah, former rapporteur of the students associations, said the students will continue their strike until the faculty's administration and the Ministry of Higher Education respond to their requests.

Mr. Abu Farah, who has been served a warning by the administration, said the decisions of the students bodies are legal and binding, despite their rejection as illegal by acting university President Issa Khebeis.

"Our main objective is not to strike nor to deal accusations against the management, but to defuse

the crisis," Mr. Abu Farah said, adding that the students will not suspend their strike until all their demands are met.

Another student stated that the administration is trying to undermine the strike by asking non-striking students to inform their striking colleagues that if they persist, they will be called in for investigation.

"This is the spark that ignited the crisis," according to Firas Halaweh, another student.

A third student, Mahmoud Hawamdeh, described the administration's promises as "empty slogans" and argued that the students are demanding their basic rights, including the establishment of student councils, the appointment of a resident doctor, and a medical insurance plan covering all students.

Dr. Khebeis for his part said the strike was illegal and stressed that it is not possible for the university administration to discuss such issues with outlawed and politicised groups who are influenced by external sources.

Defending the administration's position not to negotiate with the striking students, Dr. Khebeis said they represent no more than ten per cent of the student body.

He added that the university administration met with the elected student committee and urged them not to escalate the crisis.

He pointed out that the administration has served warnings to the striking students in accordance with university regulations. He noted that some students returned to class, while others are still absent.

Meanwhile, a group of students issued a statement to the effect that they have reached an agreement with the administration, under which a resident doctor will be appointed within 20 days, health insurance cards will be issued to all students, and the student council or students' union statutes will be endorsed.

However, the striking students denied that the elected committee has reached any agreement with the university and stressed that they know nothing about such a meeting.

Workshop opens to assess progress in climatic change programme

AMMAN (Petra) — The General Corporation for Environmental Protection (GCEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Wednesday held a workshop to assess the progress achieved in Jordan's climatic changes programme, which is being partly financed by the UNDP.

The participants discussed five working papers dealing with the past emission of gases and smoke in Jordan, as well as the pollution caused by industry, power generation, transport, waste water, and solid waste.

Addressing the opening session, Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan said with the help of the UNDP, Jordan started this pilot project 14

months ago in order to control and minimise the poisonous fumes and warm gases emitted by various projects and factories in accordance with U.N. recommendations and resolutions on protecting the earth's climate passed in 1992.

The project also aims at substituting substances that harm the ozone layer and raise the earth's temperature with harmless substances, the minister said.

Jordan had 428 industrial firms in 1994 but now has 7,000, he said. They offer great contributions to the national economy, but these firms and factories, in addition to vehicles, the burning of used tires, and garbage dumps, have been emitting harmful gases and fumes that harm the atmosphere, change climatic conditions,

and increase global warming, he added.

A rise by one degree in the earth's temperature would reduce rainfall by 10 per cent and reduce world cereal production by 20 per cent, according to Mr. Kreishan.

GCEP Director Saleh Sahre' said Jordan, like other countries, suffers from environmental problems resulting from urban, industrial, agricultural, and economic expansion.

Not only are these causing harm to the climate through the emission of gases but they are also depleting the country's water resources, he said.

UNDP resident representative Jorgen Lissner expressed appreciation of Jordan's endeavours to deal with global warming and environmental issues.

EU-Jordan partnership seminar concludes with focus on finance, banking challenges

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A seminar on the Euro-Jordan association agreement ended Wednesday on an optimistic note that encouraged participants from the private and public sectors to encounter the challenges the accord poses to the Kingdom's economy.

The three-day seminar, entitled "Partnership in Development," coincided with the signing of the association agreement between Jordan and the European Union (EU) which took place in Brussels last Monday.

Yousef Mansur, director of the Technical Unit at the Ministry of Planning, emphasised the importance of Jordan joining world bodies such as the EU and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), since the Kingdom and its neighbours from the Middle East and North Africa lost their comparative advantages arising from geographic location, cheap labour, and abundance of raw materials.

By joining the WTO, Dr. Mansur said, Jordan will benefit from all privileges granted to all the organisation members, such as the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment and the National treatment, whereby all Jordanian exports will be treated without discrimination.

"A speedy accession to the WTO will move Jordan closer to implementing optimal trade practices of a highly comprehensive

scope," he said.

The accord will provide free access for Jordan's agricultural and industrial products, and European products will enter the country's market free of customs duties for a transitional period of 12 years, he added.

"As we lower duties, consumers will find inexpensive, high quality products," Dr. Mansur stressed.

Mifteh Akel, Arab Bank regional manager, pointed to the negative and positive impacts the agreement will have on Jordan's banking and financial sectors, stating that the accord will provide incentives to rehabilitate financial institutions in order to provide comprehensive financial services.

The accord will also boost Jordan's financial presence in foreign markets and will pave the way for a flow of foreign capital into the country, he said.

As for the banking sector, he added, it might not be able to confront foreign competition because of the small banking sector's limited financial and human resources and its inability to increase spending in the fields of training and technology.

Hafeth Za'afan, a Tunisian expert, presented Tunisia's experience as the first country to sign an association agreement with the EU.

Mr. Za'afan said Tunisia, like any other country that has signed an agreement with the EU, is facing challenges in its efforts to liber-

alise its economy and raise its industries to international standards.

He also touched upon the difficulties that would arise as a result of establishing a free trade area with the EU, stressing the importance of rehabilitating industries, facilitating procedures, and providing suitable infrastructure to generate more foreign investments and capital into the eastern Mediterranean countries.

As a result of gradually eliminating customs duties on European products, eastern Mediterranean countries could encounter a loss in revenues.

Mr. Za'afan said Tunisia has addressed this issue by imposing a pre-tax on imported products to compensate such losses.

Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Halaiga and JBA board member Fakhri Bilbeisi called for the establishment of a business development centre in Jordan to provide the necessary diagnostic and consulting services on organisation of local small and medium enterprises (SMEs), quality, ISO certification, management, marketing, technology, and training and development.

Dr. Halaiga also urged the EU to implement programmes for SMEs to enhance their competitiveness and export abilities.

The establishment and/or strengthening of information networks is a prerequisite for the modernisation and development of SMEs,

said Dr. Halaiga, urging the EU to provide user-friendly data interchange networks that would make available information on potential suppliers, customers, partners, providers of technology and data on market research, benchmarking and best practices.

The EU should also encourage and support financial institutions in Jordan to establish venture capital facilities by providing know-how in risk analysis and project follow up, said Dr. Halaiga.

He noted that the educational system in Jordan until now has been geared more towards preparing students for the public sector than to providing skills for the private sector. Therefore, he urged the EU to conduct a study, with the assistance of local industrial federations, to identify gaps and weaknesses, as well as overall training needs in Jordan.

Dr. Halaiga also called for the development of the Jordanian vocational training capabilities and the exchange of human resource managers/trainers between enterprises.

Participants in the seminar, organised by JBA in cooperation with the EU, called for the establishment of a national committee that would follow up on the implementation of the agreement.

The participants also called for the enhancement of export capabilities of Jordan's agricultural sector to take advantage of the export opportunities provided by the accord.

Ramon Mestres, economic advisor at the Delegation of the European Commission in Jordan, promised to convey Jordan's recommendations to the commission. He urged the Kingdom to prepare a regulatory framework and set the structure for Jordan and the EU to be able to open a real partnership in order to maximise the benefits and achieve the anticipated economic growth.

He added that between 1992 and 1996, Jordan received "substantial and uninterrupted support for its reform programme from the commission's budgetary resources; a total of ECU 200 million has been allocated from the financial protocols and other commission budget lines.

In an attempt to alleviate the external and fiscal pressures on the Jordanian economy and pave the way for a fruitful EU-Jordan association agreement, the EU granted Jordan about \$110 million under the MEDA financial package adopted in 1996.

Mr. Mestres added that the objectives of the EU aid to Jordan's reform process are: to help sustain an import level necessary for growth through the provision of foreign exchange, and to help mitigate the short-term impact of adjustment by guaranteeing budget funds for social and infrastructure purposes with a view to sustaining employment and offering future returns.

Youths destroy village facilities in riot

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of youth went on a rampage early Monday morning, destroying government facilities in the Northern Badia villages of Mikafteh and Salhieh, Mafrqa Governor Ahmed Lawzi told the Jordan Times Wednesday.

The governor said the cause of this disturbance was still unknown. However, some newspapers attributed the uproar to some villagers' dissatisfaction concerning the lack of their tribes' representation in the newly-formed Parliament.

The youth, most of whom were under the age of 18, burned all the facilities of a two-room medical centre, broke the windows of a nearby school, and started a small fire in one of its classes, according to Mr. Lawzi. The teenagers, whom the governor described as "immature and irresponsible," also threw stones at four cars and broke their windows.

"Nobody was injured, but damages are expected to exceed JD1,000," Mr. Lawzi stated.

The villagers strongly denounced the incident and helped security personnel identify some of the youngsters involved in the riot, he added.

The governor, commenting on a report by Al Khaleej newspaper that security personnel arrested the mayor of Mikafteh, said the mayor was detained for interrogation purposes.

However, Mr. Lawzi said, the mayor has not been released yet.

Conditions are back to normal in the two villages and the suspected juveniles are still being interrogated, the governor concluded.

Jordan signs JD17.5 million loan with German bank for Amman water network improvement

PETRA (Petra) — Germany is to grant Jordan a soft loan totalling DM43 million (approximately JD17.5 million) to help the country finance the rehabilitation of water and sewage networks in the Amman region.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin signed the agreement in the ancient city of Petra upon the conclusion of a donor nations-Jordanian conference attended by European ambassadors and other representatives of donor bodies. The general manager of the German Development Bank Werner Franke signed for Germany.

In remarks to the media afterwards, Dr. Haddadin said the first disbursement of the loan, amounting to DM8 million (JD3.26 million), will carry a 4.5 per cent interest rate with a five-year grace period.

The second disbursement, which amounts to DM35 million (JD14.2 million) will carry a 0.75 per cent interest rate with a ten-year grace period, he said.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation is in need of this loan to replace the old and worn-out water and sewage networks in Amman, which will reduce the losses through leakage and help meet the growing water demand for domestic, industrial, and commercial purposes, he stated.

Dr. Franke said the first part of the loan is repayable over 20 years while the second part is to be paid back over 40 years. He noted that the bank and Jordan have been collaborating in devel-

opment projects over the past 30 years, during which the bank provided loans for schools, electricity, and irrigation in the Jordan Rift Valley.

At present, Dr. Franke said, the German bank is financing the construction of a DM76.4 million (JD31.1 million) waste water treatment plant in Irbid and is studying the financing of a project for drawing water from Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley to Amman in conjunction with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The bank is also studying a project for supplying water to Wadi Musa, located near the ancient city of Petra, in conjunction with the French government, he said.

Dr. Franke said his bank was also studying a project for expanding the Irbid sewage project within the next two years.

The German Development Bank has given Jordan a loan of DM20 million (JD8.1 million) to help finance the government-sponsored social security package in the less developed regions of Jordan, including the Palestinian refugee camps, he added.

The bank's overall contributions to Jordan's development over the past 30 years amount to DM1.32 billion (JD537 million), according to Dr. Franke.

Also at the Petra meeting, Jordan submitted a multi-billion dinar water sector investment programme covering the years 1997-2011.

Islamic council denounces practice of appointing ministers from Parliament

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Islamic Organisations and Societies in Jordan Wednesday issued a statement criticising former governments for choosing ministers from among Parliament members since, it said, such a practice reflects weakness in the executive authority and portrays the prime minister designate as lacking self-confidence.

The council's secretary general, Abdul Latif Subeishi, who circulated the state-

ment to the media, expressed the view that the Jordanian constitution does not allow a person to serve as minister while he or she is member of the Lower House of Parliament.

Since the executive, judicial, and legislative authorities should be independent from one another according to the constitution, the executive body should not include members of the legislative assembly, he said.

Citing an example of a

violation of the constitution, Mr. Subeishi said the former Kabarti government of 33 members included 22 members of the Lower House of Parliament, something unprecedented in Jordan's history.

Former ministers who were also serving as deputies exploited their position by engaging in nepotism, with the result that other people were deprived of their rights and raised complaints about

such injustice, according to Mr. Subeishi.

He said people were encouraged by remarks a few months ago by His Majesty King Hussein, who said he does not approve of persons serving in both branches of government simultaneously.

Mr. Subeishi expressed hope that each authority's independence will be respected whenever a Council of Ministers is formed.

Municipality developing open-air markets to improve service around the capital

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman Municipality Wednesday said it is currently involved in developing and improving public open-air markets in and around the capital to provide better services to the local community.

Samir Khattab, a senior municipality official, said a tender has been floated inviting bidders to build a large hangar with 280 stores

and facilities at the cost of JD245,000.

The municipality is now in the process of appropriating a plot of land within Al Hussein refugee camp along the lines of the public market in Al Wahdat, he said.

Mr. Khattab noted that the municipality has divided the public open-air markets into two categories. The first comprises three markets that will be open seven days

a week. These markets already exist at Al Wahdat camp, Al Hussein refugee camp, and Al Naser camp.

The second category comprises four markets open two days a week. These are located at Marka, Qweis-meh, and Abu Nuseir districts.

According to Mr. Khattab, these markets have been created in view of the congestion of vendors selling

goods on carts and trolleys in the streets.

He noted that these markets have different locations in Amman to provide easy access and to save consumers and local residents the trouble of reaching distant markets.

These markets sell a variety of merchandise, including vegetables and fruits at prices lower than elsewhere, he said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

- * German film "In Honour of Joseph Beuys" (in English with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Mazen Asfour) at Darat Al Fuman, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

FIFTH JORDANIAN THEATRE FESTIVAL

- * Two plays entitled "The Necklace and the Bracelet" and "Yama" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. respectively.
- * Play entitled "Blue ... Green" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Friday at 8:00 p.m.

BOOK EXHIBITION

- * 10th Annual Book Exhibition at the Ahliah School for Girls, Jabal Amman until Nov. 29.

CHRISTMAS BAZAARS/CHOIR

- * Annual Christmas charity bazaar by the American Union of Amman at the Marriott Hotel on Friday, Nov. 28 (11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.).
- * Annual YWCA Christmas classical choir at the Royal Cultural Centre on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday (3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Dec. '97) at 8:00 p.m.
- * The Armenian Relief Society (ARS) annual bazaar at the ARS headquarters in Ashrafieh, near the Armenian Church, on Thursday and Friday 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. (Tel. 775368/773548).
- (Includes hand-made lace and silverware, gifts, Christmas cards, pottery, foods and raffle).

EXHIBITIONS

- * Paintings by Ammar Kham-mash at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 12.
- * Paintings by Saadi Al-Kaabi at Orient Gallery (Tel. 681303/4), until Dec. 4.
- * An exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Koraishi, and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Massoudi, inspired by the poems of Mahmoud Darwish, at Darat Al Fuman, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Nasir Abdul Aziz, and works by contemporary Arab artists.
- * "Portrait '97" — works by over thirty Arab artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Uttheina, until Nov. 30.
- * Works by Khalid Khreis at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 10.
- * Exhibition of wallhangings and weavings by Bashir Khatem and others at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra Street (Tel. 699131/2) until Dec. 4.
- * "Journey Within" by Pakistani artist Gulgee and his son, sculptor Amin Gulgee, at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Tel. 630128), until Dec. 15.

EU to keep pressure on U.S. to raise climate goals

HAMBURG, Germany (R) — The European Union will maintain pressure on the U.S. for more ambitious targets to curb output of greenhouse gases, EU Environment Commissioner Ritt Bjerregaard was quoted as saying Wednesday.

In an interview with the German weekly Die Zeit ahead of next month's United Nations conference on global warming in Kyoto, Japan, Ms. Bjerregaard further rejected the argument that environmental protection was bad for economic growth and jobs.

The EU wants industrialised nations to cut their output of the gases seen as causing global warming — primarily carbon dioxide and others released by the burning of fossil fuels — by 15 per cent by the year 2010, measured against

1990 levels.

It has criticised as inadequate a U.S. plan that would merely roll back CO2 output to 1990 levels by 2000.

Ms. Bjerregaard said U.S. President Bill Clinton's own speeches reveal that he wants to do more to fight the problem, but that his actions have not lived up to his words.

"We are trying to convince the Americans that the European reduction goal is not unrealistic, as they claim, and that they too could do more," she said. The interview was distributed in advance of publication in the newspaper's Thursday edition.

"There is no longer any doubt on the scientific evidence. Some countries even think the EU proposal doesn't go far enough," Ms. Bjerregaard said.

"Even I say that a 15 per

cent reduction in greenhouse gases won't solve the problem it will just be the first step in the right direction.

"Therefore I cannot imagine that someone would take the responsibility of leaving the Kyoto conference without a substantive result. What we now must do is to put pressure on those countries that have less ambitious goals."

The EU aims to double to 12 per cent by 2010 the proportion of energy it derives from alternative sources such as solar, wind, water and biomass, and negotiate with car makers to set voluntary targets on cutting CO2 output.

The EU's proposed energy tax could create 457,000 jobs by the year 2005, she said. Denmark's record shows that high environmental standards are compatible with low

unemployment, while Spain's experience suggests that lower environmental standards do not prevent high unemployment, she said.

The planned tax, faced with resistance from EU member countries, will not be implemented in January 1998, as originally planned, however, she said. And individual countries are unlikely to move ahead with a national tax unless the EU moves as a whole, which would make it easier to reach the goals on CO2 output, she said.

Ms. Bjerregaard said that no new car in Europe should burn more than five litres of fuel per 100 km, and that she would propose a bill to that effect by next March at the European Commission if she could not get voluntary commitments from automobile manufacturers.

U.S. must guard against biological, chemical weapons — Cohen

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States must protect itself from the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons, which the Iraqi crisis has made clear is the "challenge of the 21st century," Defence Secretary William Cohen wrote in Wednesday's Washington Post.

"We cannot allow vulnerability to chemical and biological weapons attacks to become our Achilles heel," Mr. Cohen wrote in a letter published a day after he presented a report on the capabilities and intentions of 25 countries which have or are developing weapons of mass destruction.

Besides the worldwide threat these weapons pose in the hands of "regional aggressors, third-rate armies, terrorist groups and even religious cults," Mr. Cohen raises the likelihood of the United States becoming a chief target.

"Alarmingly, some potential adversaries believe that using these weapons against our troops in the field or our people at home provides their only real means of taking America, given our military superiority," he said.

Since there is no single defence against this threat, Mr. Cohen said, "we must treat it as if it were a chronic disease," promptly countering its early symptoms with "a combination of treatments."

Mr. Cohen said U.S. President Bill Clinton has directed the Pentagon to intensify efforts to prevent the proliferation of such deadly weapons; to deter attacks against the United States and its allies, and to prepare U.S. military forces to "fight and win in the face of chemical or biological attack."

Mr. Cohen reiterated the announcement he made in his report.

"Proliferation: Threat and Response," that funding for defence capabilities against these weapons will be increased by \$1 billion.

On a level of "domestic preparedness," he added, the Pentagon is "enhancing significantly the role of the National Guard and working closely with other federal agencies and state and local officials."

"We also have also launched a programme to train police, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and other 'first responders' in more than 120 American cities to increase the preparedness (against) a biological or chemical terrorist incident," Mr. Cohen said.

The conclusion of the current Iraqi crisis, he said, "will be but 'the end of the beginning' of a long-term global battle in which we can afford neither to retreat nor to relax."

Bangladesh court indicts Ershad, others in 1981 murder

DHAKA (AFP) — A Bangladesh court has indicted former president Hussain Muhammad Ershad and four others on charges of murdering a general who allegedly led a 1981 abortive coup, court officials said Wednesday.

"The charge has been framed against the accused ... as there are substantial elements to indict them," Dhaka's Additional District and Sessions Judge Mia Mohammad Sharif said when initiating the hearing Tuesday.

Major General Abul Manjur, who allegedly led the 1981 coup in which former president Ziaur Rahman was killed, was himself murdered soon afterwards in mysterious circumstances. Thirteen other army officials were court-martialed and hanged.

Ziaur Rahman founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), now the main opposition party. It is led by his widow and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The four others indicted are former army officers, including a general.

The Manjur murder case was filed in 1995 when the BNP under Khaleda Zia was in power but progress was stalled until Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League came to power last year.

Mr. Ershad, who was the army chief in 1981 and is now a partner in Sheikh Hasina's government of "national consensus," came to power in a 1982 bloodless coup and stepped down in the face of a mass pro-democracy campaign in 1990.

The police case regarding Ziaur Rahman's killing was also revived earlier this year after Sheikh Hasina promised that all political assassins would go on trial. The case was lodged soon after the 1981 coup but was reportedly suspended by the Ershad regime.

Ziaur Rahman, himself a former army chief, emerged as the country's strongman in the period between a coup on Aug. 15, 1975, in which the country's founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed, and counter-coups in November the same year. He eventually became president.

The belated trial of those involved in the August 1975 coup started early this year after Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Sheikh Mujibur, led her Awami League party back to power and parliament scrapped an indemnity act.

The act had been incorporated in the constitution by Ziaur Rahman.



Methodist Bishop Paul Verryn, followed by Reverend Peter Story, arrives for the third day of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing (AFP photo)

Priest weeps at memory of alleged Winnie murder victim

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — A white priest who sheltered young blacks in the 1980s publicly broke down and sobbed Wednesday, saying he might have saved a teenager allegedly murdered by President Nelson Mandela's ex-wife.

Methodist Bishop Paul Verryn was testifying before a sensational hearing of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission probing 18 human rights charges against Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and her supporters.

Bishop Verryn said he witnessed several of Winnie's supporters in the notorious Mandela United Football Club aggressively interrogate 14-year-old Stompie Seipei in his mission manse in 1988, several days before Seipei was killed.

"I did not remove him from the mission house and get him to a place that is safe," Mr. Verryn said bowing his head, his voice shaking with emotion.

"If I had acted in another way, he might still be alive today," Mr. Verryn said tearfully, directing an apology to Seipei's mother in the hearing.

Instead, Mr. Verryn said he ordered the interrogators not to conduct their activities "like the security police" in his mission.

Seipei, one of the youngest members of the Football Club, was subsequently killed after Winnie and others accused the boy

of being a police informer. At the time, the Methodist cleric sheltered many destitute black activists in his small mission in the sprawling Soweto township.

Bishop Verryn has denied sleeping with any of the boys, who all have subsequently retracted their claims, saying they were coached by the Football Club to implicate the priest.

Bishop Verryn said he "offered forgiveness" to Ms. Madikizela-Mandela for her accusations against him, even if she does not "think I deserve to offer that."

Winnie's lawyer, Ishmail Semanya, said his client would attempt to seek reconciliation with Bishop Verryn in private, away from the glare of the media at what he called the truth commission's "carnival."

Mr. Semanya criticised Bishop Verryn for not seeking reconciliation earlier.

Katiza Cebekhulu, a witness who now lives abroad, testified Tuesday that he saw Winnie Madikizela-Mandela stab Seipei to death, and thrash another youth with a rawhide whip.

But several other former Winnie admirers, including Barend Thabiso Mono who appeared Wednesday, said Madikizela-Mandela merely beat up Seipei, whom they last saw in the care of one of her deputies, Jerry Richardson.

Mr. Mono told the commission that Winnie

Madikizela-Mandela "started beating" him and three others, including Stompie, initially with fists and then with a rawhide whip.

The assault occurred after Winnie, who was affectionately called "mummy" by her supporters, accused the four of sleeping with Bishop Verryn, Mr. Mono said.

"Winnie Mandela at first beat us with her fists. The rest joined and lifted us up and dropped us on the ground. We started screaming and they were singing," Mr. Mono said in a written statement to the truth commission.

Ms. Madikizela-Mandela and three followers then hit the four alleged sodomists with a "sjambok" (rawhide whip), Mr. Mono added.

Seipei was singled out for further attacks, and was last seen being ushered away by Mr. Richardson, who said he was taking him to his parent's home outside Johannesburg.

Cebekhulu was whisked out of South Africa Tuesday night after testifying at the hearing.

The witness, who returned to South Africa after six years in exile, is under the care of Baroness Emma Nicholson, a former British Conservative Party MP who now works for the Liberal Democrats.

Winnie is expected to testify at the end of the spectacular week-long hearing, which could close Saturday or Sunday.

U.N. gets go-ahead for massacre enquiry in former Zaire

KINSHASA (AFP) — The government in Kinshasa Wednesday gave a U.N. team the green light to begin a long-delayed enquiry into the alleged massacres of tens of thousands of Rwandan refugees in the former Zaire.

The investigation "can start its mission today (Wednesday)," the minister for reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) government, Etienne-Richard Mbaya, told the head of the team, Atsu-Koffi Amega.

Mr. Mbaya is in charge of relations between the DRC government, formed after Laurent Kabila became president after leading a seven-month uprising against Mobutu Sese Seko, and the United Nations.

Many months of delays to the start of the inquiry strained relations between the world body and the cash-strapped regime led by Mr. Kabila, whose former rebels were accused of massacring refugees.

Tuesday night, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced that the mission would be withdrawn within 48 hours unless it was given the go-ahead. Mr. Annan had wanted to order the immediate withdrawal but was persuaded by Washington to give a 48-hour deadline, sources in New York said.

The go-ahead for the mission came as the Kinshasa government was asking donor nations to pledge millions in reconstruction aid to the former Zaire at a conference in Brussels next month.

That conference, and an upcoming visit by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Dec. 12 — on her first visit to Africa since taking up her post — were believed to be factors in Mr. Kabila's decision.

At Kinshasa's demand, the U.N. team is set to look into an entire series of alleged massacres dating from March 1993 to December 1997.

Marshal Mobutu died in exile in September. The team will investigate both the alleged mass slaughter of Rwandan Hutus by the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation (ADFL) that swept Mr. Kabila to power and the killings of Tutsis and others in eastern Zaire dating back to the genocide in neighbouring Rwanda.

Kinshasa had delayed the start of the mission, arguing about where the team should start their enquiry. It was accused of seeking to use the delay to get rid of evidence of the alleged massacres.

"Nothing is stopping you from starting your mission, this time where you want," Mr. Mbaya told Atsu Koffi Amega, the head of the mission, after finally meeting him for the first time Wednesday.

Mr. Mbaya also said he could arrange a meeting between the Togolese lawyer and Mr. Kabila Wednesday or Thursday. "Nobody has delayed" the enquiry, he claimed, before going into a closed-door meeting with the mission chief. The U.N. team has been in Kinshasa for two weeks unable to get the go-ahead.

The mission made a first visit in August and September but was barred from starting its investigation, notably refusing it the right to travel to the Mbandaka region in the northwest, where thousands of former Rwandan Hutu militiamen are alleged to have been massacred.

In October, Mr. Annan called the investigators back to New York for consultations before sending them back to Kinshasa after Mr. Kabila told U.S. envoy Bill Richardson the investigations could at last begin.

Tibet warns of instability caused by Dalai Lama

BEIJING (AFP) — China's Communist Party has warned again that the Dalai Lama is instigating rebellion in Tibet and called for stronger efforts to win over the minds of the people in the troubled region.

"The origin of instability in Tibet is the Dalai clique, and our battle against the Dalai Lama must be fought in the spiritual arena," said a front-page editorial in the Tibet Daily received in Beijing Wednesday.

"We must fight hard against the disturbances and sabotage of the Dalai

Lama and end separatism to build up a stable atmosphere that will allow economic growth," the editorial said.

China is coming under increasing international pressure to allow more freedom in Tibet, but is reacting by imposing stricter and stricter regimes on the region.

However, its efforts to wipe out all influence of the Dalai Lama — who fled to India after an abortive rebellion in 1959 — appear to have backfired.

"We must replace these outmoded and reactionary

thoughts (of the Dalai Lama) with the virtues of a socialist life," the editorial, published on Nov. 17 said.

The Dalai Lama is Tibet's top spiritual leader.

He infuriated Beijing in 1995 by naming the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama — the second highest figure in Tibet — before China did.

China banned all references to the Dalai Lama, but this just drew the battle lines between Tibet's religious devotees and Beijing.

European, U.S. women 'happier' than their mothers

BRUSSELS (Reuters) — Most European and American women think they are happier than their mothers, according to a report issued Wednesday.

In a survey of 6,000 women by the Louis Harris Research Institute, 51 per cent said they were happier than their mothers were at the same age. Fourteen per cent were less happy and 27 per cent as happy.

A majority also said contraception and new domestic appliances had improved their quality of life, as well as education

and job opportunities. But they were worried about healthcare, education, job losses and crime.

Fifty-six per cent said they believed the overall quality of life would continue to improve over the next 20 years.

The survey, of women in Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Spain and the United States, was commissioned by personal hygiene product manufacturer Kimberly-Clark.

Working women in particular, juggling a career, family and home, felt they had no more time for

their personal lives than their mother's generation had.

When asked to rank the areas of their lives to which they would like to devote more time, most put the education and development of their children top of the list, before personal relationships and leisure activities.

"Work and social lives, two areas where women believe their opportunities have improved significantly compared to their mothers' generation, bring up the rear," the survey said.

U.N. gets go-ahead for mass enquiry in former Zaire

KINSHASA (AFP) — The U.N. has given the go-ahead for a mass enquiry into the deaths of thousands of people in the former Zaire.

of victim

Mandela's death has been a source of grief for many people in South Africa.

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Taleban military refuses passage for U.N. food convoy

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — The Islamic Taleban militia has refused to allow a U.N. food convoy passage to the central province of Bamian held by an opposing Shiite faction, Afghan sources said Wednesday.

The sources said the hardline militia voiced fears their military rivals would benefit from the delivery as Bamian is controlled mostly by the Shiite Hezb-i-Wahdat faction, a member of the anti-Taleban opposition alliance.

Sources here said about 160,000 people were at risk due to food shortages in several districts of Bamian and nearby Ghor province.

But talks between a U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) team and Taleban officials in the militia's headquarters in Kandahar, southwest Afghanistan, to try to reach those in need had broken down, the private Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported.

The Taleban had instead told U.N. officials to use a long, mountainous northern route controlled by the opposition alliance, the Pakistan-based Afghan news service quoted Taleban spokesman Wakil Ahmed as saying.

The Taleban have "no intention" of opening roads that it controls, Mr. Ahmed said, adding: "We suspect the facility will be misused by military groups," AIP reported.

No confirmation was immediately available from the U.N. officials, but the situation in Bamian has worsened as the Taleban is blocking access to the region from three sides in the east, south and southwest.

An emergency food convoy with 600 tonnes of wheat supplies for the people of Bamian was already in Kabul, awaiting clearance from the Taleban leadership, WFP

Belgian police accuse Hungarians of hindering murder probe

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Belgian prosecutors Tuesday accused Hungarian police of failing to co-operate with investigations into murders allegedly committed by pastor Andras Pandi, together with his daughter, Agnes.

Brussels' prosecutor's office said it had been waiting for two weeks for replies to queries made to Hungarian police in connection with the killings of six members of the Pandi family between 1986 and 1990.

The prosecutors also said comments made by Hungarian police Colonel Lajos Kovacs relating to Agnes Pandi's involvement in the murders could be detrimental to the investigation.

Agnes Pandi, 39, the pastor's eldest daughter, said last week that she and her father, with whom she had an incestuous relationship, had together murdered five family members.

Hungarian-born Andras Pandi, 71, continues to deny that he killed two ex-wives and four of his children, and refuses to divulge further information.

His daughter's confession and the confirmation Monday that human remains found at one of the homes were of both relatives and non-relatives, led prosecutors to fear the couple may have murdered as many as 10 people.

Flemish press reports last week speculated that bones found under a concrete slab in one of Pandi's homes were those of a Hungarian woman who arrived in Belgium with her daughter after replying to a personal advert placed by the pastor in search of a wife.

In Budapest, Col. Kovacs said that Agnes Pandi was heavily influenced by her father who ordered her to murder a step-sister, Timea, in 1984, who had had a child by the pastor.

The police chief suggested that when Timea tried to leave the family, the father was afraid she would reveal the incest and so ordered her murder.

Belgian prosecutors intend to continue questioning Agnes Pandi and, at the end of the week, they hope to set up a face-to-face meeting between father and daughter.



Recent police hand out picture of Agnes Pandi, 39 (AP photo)

Indian government hangs on as ally dithers

NEW DELHI (R) — The survival of India's ruling coalition hung in the balance Wednesday as its key ally dithered over whether to seek a compromise solution to their row or make good on a threat to withdraw its support.

Analysts said it was looking increasingly likely that the Congress Party, which keeps the 15-party United Front in power, would try to defuse the crisis to avert an election.

"The chances of something being worked out are much less bleak than they were two or three days ago," said Pran Chopra of the centre for policy research in New Delhi.

The Congress Party last week issued the united front with an ultimatum — expel a southern regional party which was named in a report on the 1991 assassination of former Premier Rajiv Gandhi from the

coalition or lose Congress Party support.

But Congress has not acted on its threat even though Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral has rejected the demand, and United Front leaders said Tuesday that both sides were working to find a face-saving way out of the impasse.

"Ultimately, there will be an amicable settlement. Positive signals are there," Food Minister Raghunath Prasad Singh told reporters late Tuesday.

Indian stock markets rallied early Wednesday amid rising hopes for an end to the deadlock, with the Bombay 30-share index up 1.81 per cent at 3,542.92 at 0624 GMT.

Despite the rising hopes, members of Congress continued to disrupt parliamentary proceedings Wednesday by shouting their demands for the

ministers in the government until the Jain commission's final report is published.

Mr. Chopra said Congress President Sitaram Kesri had backed his party, which is internally divided and lacking confidence that it could carry the day in elections, into a corner.

"I think he is in a quandary," Mr. Chopra said. "He has gone out on a limb and he has not been able to go back. It was a case of bad judgement on his part, which the others (in his party) exploited before he had time for any second thoughts."

Analysts believe Mr. Kesri misjudged the resilience of the United Front, whose ability to remain united against the odds was described in a Hindustan Times editorial as "one of the unexpected fall-outs" of the crisis.

Consumer group urges speed limits for baby walkers

BRUSSELS (R) — Baby walkers, promoted by many manufacturers as ways of helping children learn to walk, actually put children at risk of serious accidents and need speed limits, the European consumers' organisation BEUC said Tuesday.

Tests carried out by the London-based standards agency International Testing (IT) on 31 makes of baby walker found that none would pass the draft European safety standard now under discussion, it said in a statement.

An analysis of 6,000 reported accidents, including two deaths, revealed dangers apparently not addressed by the safety standard, it added.

"As the Christmas rush approaches, we are sending out an urgent warning to parents about the dangers of baby walkers to try to avoid the senseless and sometimes fatal accidents which we have seen in the past..." BEUC Director Jim Murray said.

Most accidents happen because the toys allow small children to zoom around twice as fast as if they were crawling or walking, often too fast for an adult to stop them from bumping into sharp objects or falling down stairs, it said.

Along with BEUC, it is urging the European Commission to introduce a speed limit of one-metre per second to prevent the baby walkers exceeding normal toddling pace.

Irish teenage rape-abortion row before High Court

DUBLIN (AFP) — The case of a pregnant teenage rape victim which has stirred deeply-held feelings about abortion in Ireland was officially placed before the country's High Court Tuesday.

The deposition takes the legal controversy surrounding the 13-year-old girl up one more level after a children's court ruled last week that she could travel to Britain for an abortion.

Regardless of the High Court's outcome, the case is almost certain to land in Ireland's highest court, the Supreme Court, before the end of the week.

The girl, who is 13 weeks pregnant, was allegedly raped by a man who lives in the same caravan community of Irish gypsies as her. She has been put in the state's care.

The alleged assailant, a father of three, turned himself in to police over the weekend and was charged with statutory rape.

The girl's parents, who initially seemed to favour an abortion, are challenging the children court's decision with the help of Youth Defence, an Irish anti-abortion group.

Abortion remains highly controversial among the country's deeply Roman Catholic population, despite a Supreme Court ruling after a similar case five years ago.

In that case, a 14-year-old girl became pregnant as a result of abuse by the father of a friend and the state took legal action to prevent her from taking her to Britain for an abortion.

The Supreme Court then ruled that abortion was legal if there was a "real and substantial risk" to the life of the mother, including a risk of suicide. In all other circumstances it was to remain banned.

Computer test could render detection of cancer of the uterus infallible

LONDON (AFP) — British researchers believe they have developed a computerised test for uterine cancer that may one day virtually remove the margin of human error, the British Journal of Cancer reported Tuesday.

The research team at Nottingham City Hospital said in the report that the disease could be detected at an early stage by analysing blood cells collected in a cervical smear test.

They said they found a direct correlation between the density of the blood cells and the degree of advancement of the cancer. The research team said it would take 5-10 years before the test could be

Computerised pen wins European IT prize

BRUSSELS (R) — A device that looks and works like a big ballpoint pen but is actually a miniature computer system won a grand prize at a European technology conference Tuesday.

The "LCI-smartpen", manufactured by the Dutch company LCI computer group NV LCI, is used to verify signatures when they are needed to carry out business or other confidential electronic transactions.

The pen includes sensors so that when someone uses it to sign his or her name on a piece of paper, a computer equipped with special software can tell whether it is the real thing.

LCI won 200,000 euros (\$228,000) at the annual European Information Technology Prize ceremony sponsored by the European Commission and the scientific organisation Euro-Case.

Hungarian witches tried for tax evasion

BUDAPEST (AFP) — A coven of Hungarian witches was facing a possible spell in prison after being grilled in court here Tuesday on charges of alleged tax evasion.

The Hungarian Witches' Federation was set up as a small religious denomination in 1992, but according to public prosecutor Ambros Berki it also offers costly "religious" services for which it ought to be paying taxes.

The federation charges as much as 80,000 forints (\$410) — double the average Hungarian salary — for "charm removal," and 21,000 forints for common-or-garden "sorcery."

Other specialties include "magic initiation," "astral projection," "technomagic," "work magic," and "mummy magic."

"Money flows there", Mr. Berki said. "We want the court to clearly define which part of their services can be pursued as part of their religious activity, and which part should be pursued on an entrepreneurial basis", he said.

Mr. Berki's office took the witches to court after allegations that they had been extorting money from gullible victims.

Pakistan P.M. sees 'conspiracy', army speaks

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, on trial for contempt of court and challenged over legislation his government has introduced, said Wednesday he was a victim of conspiracy.

"Conspiracies cannot hamper our strides into 21st century," said Mr. Sharif, who has been locked in a constitutional row with the judiciary and president for several weeks.

"We have to operate upon the cancer afflicting to the country," Mr. Sharif said at the opening of a billion-dollar, 333-km motorway linking Islamabad and Lahore.

Mr. Sharif's remarks were directed at the constitutional gridlock paralysing Pakistani politics since he locked horns with the judiciary and President Farooq Leghari.

The Supreme Court resumes hearing a petition Thursday to suspend one of his first pieces of legislation, which stripped the president of the power to sack the government.

A day later the court will resume hearing charges that Mr. Sharif, in power for nine months, committed contempt of court with remarks critical of one of its rulings. In theory, a guilty verdict could force him to resign.

Cost of advising government spins upwards

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Labour government is spending an estimated 2.6 million pounds (\$4.4 million) annually on political advisers, 44 per cent more than the previous Conservative administration, media reports said Wednesday.

Prime Minister Tony Blair alone employs 18 of the 69 government advisers, of which at least 10 are paid more than 60,000 pounds (\$102,000) a year, said the Guardian.

The Financial Times reported that in 1996 in a parliamentary reply Public Services Minister David Clark said political advisers cost 1.8 million pounds (\$3 million), and only 1.3 million pounds in 1992 (\$2.2 million).

Since Labour came to power in May the bill has shot up 600,000 pounds (\$1 million), said the paper.

Bora-Bora and Tahiti hit by Cyclone Osea

PAPEETE (AFP) — Cyclone Osea caused extensive damage on Bora Bora and Maupiti islands in French Polynesia Wednesday, emergency services said.

The town halls and many houses on both islands were destroyed, officials reported.

"Certain parts of Vaitape, the main village on Bora Bora, were devastated," said a journalist on the island.

Roads were blocked and electricity and telephones cut. Two slightly injured women were the only casualties however, he said.

With winds of up to 230 kilometres an hour expected, the authorities declared a storm alert throughout the French overseas territory. Papeete was expected to be spared by the storm however, weather experts said.

In Tahiti, as in the rest of the islands of the archipelago, all schools were closed, and the population has been advised not to drive. Air Moorea has stopped all flights to Tahiti, and flights to the leeward islands have been halted by Air Tahiti.

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Menace from without

WHETHER OR not the U.N. Security Council will endorse the U.S. position that calls for inspection of all sites in Iraq, including President Saddam Hussein's palaces, Iraq's ordeal is not destined to end any time soon. It seems that even if the Iraqi regime consented to having every room and office in Iraq inspected, the U.N. could still come up with all sorts of reasons to keep the sanctions going. This leads us to believe what U.S. President Bill Clinton said earlier this month about maintaining the sanctions regime for as long as the Iraqi regime was in power or at least surrendered completely to Western dictates. Sensing this, Russia has been waging a battle in the Security Council against the endorsement of the report of the inspection commission. The report, submitted following the Russian-achieved "breakthrough" in Geneva last week, calls for a scale up of operations to include additional aerial surveillances, and intensive inspection of the country. Moscow appears to be intent on rejecting the recommendations of the U.N. commission until the Iraqi sensitivities are accommodated. The Russians argue that it is hard to imagine what the U.N. inspection teams hope to learn from visiting the dozen-or-so presidential palaces. Unless they intend to dismantle every stone or block of cement in those palaces, the inspection teams cannot really be sure of their findings. The same goes for other inspection missions being contemplated. Instead of such a futile exercise, the council should think in terms of a more sensible approach towards solving the standoff. If we assume for the sake of argument that Iraq is hiding something diabolical somewhere in the country, the best way to tackle it is by making sure that what is buried remains so.

Many countries in the Middle East and the Third World in general do stockpile all sorts of mass destruction weapons, not least our neighbour Israel. Most of them do so, however, for fear of being attacked from without. But none of them is likely to use these weapons to start a war unless they feel cornered and threatened as Iraq does today. Based on this, a more civilised solution should be sought for the containment of Iraq. Perhaps a dialogue with Baghdad and its neighbours should be started by the U.N. with the aim of finding a more effective and human solution to the crisis.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Hosni Ayesh said only Israel and the terrorists who carried out the attack on the tourists in Luxor last week benefited from the massacre. Noting that the attack in Egypt came after Cairo had led the opposition to the Doha economic summit and after Egyptian leaders displayed their backing for the Palestinian leadership in confronting Israel's practices, the writer said both the terrorists who had failed so far in their bid to topple the Egyptian regime and Israel had a common goal and must have colluded and joined forces to harm Egypt's tourist industry and weaken its national economy. Ayesh said the fact that the terrorists used such brutality in their attack in Luxor indicates that they are copying the barbaric methods of their colleagues in Algeria which means that they could be financed and directed by the same evil force. He said Egypt is being exposed to pressures from two sides: Islamist terrorism inside the country and Israeli-backed terrorism supported and financed by forces in Europe and the U.S. Ayesh said Israel and its allies in the West seem determined to prevent Egypt from exercising any regional power because Israel, to its allies, is the protector of their interests in the region.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab said most Arab countries which opposed a military strike against Iraq did so out of dissatisfaction with the U.S. administration's policies but were not motivated by their love for the Iraqi people. The writer said leaders of Arab states who voiced their opposition to the military strike have discovered that Washington does not respect the meaning of friendship with them and so they wanted to show that they can mutiny against the U.S. because it is they who had protected American interests in the region and wanted Washington to display its recognition of this fact. Qallab also criticised Syria and Egypt during Tarek Aziz's visits to the two countries saying that these two countries which earlier had opposed the American plans for a strike on Iraq failed to arrange for Mr. Aziz to meet the Syrian and Egyptian leaders as norms required. By treating Mr. Aziz in this manner the two Arab states showed that they, like the other Arab leaders, are opposed to American policies but do not harbour any friendly feelings towards the Iraqi people nor are they interested in normalising relations with the Iraqi regime.

View from Academia

A new Jordan for a new era

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

THERE IS no doubt that the Kingdom has, for a decade or so, entered a new era in many important respects. The late 1980s and early 1990s were dramatic times indeed. On the bright side, the year 1989 stands out, in our political history and in our consciousness, as the year in which Jordan embarked seriously on the road to full democracy and freedom of expression with the reintroduction of parliamentary life. In the world of school education, 1987 stands out as the auspicious year of the First Education Reform Conference which came to stress the need for the shift from quantity to quality. For higher education, 1989 witnessed the birth of the first private university in the country which would be followed by several more such institutions in subsequent years. The late eighties brought forth serious peace-making efforts which culminated in the early nineties in the Madrid Peace Conference and the signing of a peace treaty with Israel in 1994.

On the dimmer side, 1988 was the ominously historic year when the Jordan dinar lost much of its value, in the aftermath of which Jordanians were made to bear a series of uncomfortable adjustments, a crucial modification of their lifestyles, and a sincere call for thriftiness (ultimate good things, one may argue). In 1990, there was the devastating Gulf War which, in its duration and aftermath, affected Jordan negatively, yet, ultimately again, something very good came out of the human element that returned to the country, despite the pressures that came with it. In other realms (social, economic, cultural, etc.) one, I am sure, can also think of equally significant parallels.

People speak of the third millennium as heralding a new era, one which is going to be remarkably different from everything we have seen so far. In my opinion, the new era has already begun. The beginning is not the year 2000 or 2001, which is not distant anyway. Rather, the beginning lies in our awareness of the new beginning and of our need to transform, and undergo a metamorphosis in the attempt to make ourselves better fit to meet the new challenges. The transformation and the metamorphosis have begun. In this sense, we are already in the new era.

As we have entered this new era, we congratulate ourselves on the substantial amount that has been achieved. In addition to what is listed above, the quality of life has improved noticeably over the years. Despite the existing problems, the environment has become much healthier and cleaner than it was, the economy is recuperating, health services have advanced remarkably, the streets and highways and tunnels have relieved us almost entirely of the rush-hour discomfort which used to be traumatic in the not-so-distant past, the water situation has improved, and

so have communications, etc.

The real good news lies, in my opinion, in two things: a) our awareness, true awareness, of the problems we face and of the need to conduct ourselves better (we no longer fear to pinpoint or speak about our problems frankly) and b), an even more crucial factor, our realisation that our salvation and success lie in reliance on ourselves and not on others.

Having said that, however, one should emphasise that though we rejoice for what has been achieved, we need still to worry about the greater goals to be achieved. Our success so far is real, but the challenges that lie ahead are tremendous.

I am not even going to attempt to list the problems that remain yet to be solved or the challenges that need to be met: bureaucracy, impediments to investment, poverty, mediocrity of services, mediocrity of performance, corruption in its many forms, etc. Like societies the world over, especially like those in the underdeveloped part of it, we have many problems to tackle.

What I wish to emphasise, however, is the one problem that lies essentially behind all of our problems: the choice of individuals who are to spearhead change and effect the improvement of our lot.

I believe that it has become obvious to us that unless we appoint able, perceptive, and enlightened people in the various positions which lie in the different realms and spheres that need improvement and change (and essentially change needs to be effected in all realms and spheres), we better drop all talk about change.

Let me put it bluntly. We do have able individuals in charge of some of our affairs, people with vision, intelligence, sincerity, and ability who do an excellent job in whatever they are entrusted with. But these are a minority. I would say that a comfortable majority of those who are entrusted with sensitive and important jobs are either mediocre or poor, no matter how impressive they may look or sound.

This is our society's fatal failing: It does not until now, as a general rule, appoint the right person in the right place. Do not talk to me about the economic factor. It is important but not all important. In the sixties and seventies, we had money, but it was wasted or mismanaged by people who are mediocre, inefficient, or selfish and corrupt.

The problem and the solution lie in the human (not the material) capital. If we do not or cannot find the right individuals who are able and capable of translating our good intentions, hopes, plans, and strategies effectively, let's just forget it. There is no hope for us.

Unless you choose an able teacher, you better shove your fancy school building, your fancy facilities, your fancy labs, your fancy classroom, your fancy textbooks, your fancy methodology, your fancy everything in a pile of hay. Unless you choose your administrator well, you better throw your institution, establishment, section, department down a drain.

Yesterday, I received a letter from an American university asking me if I am, or know, a specialist in African-American studies to nominate for an opening they have. They tell me they are "searching" (notice the word) for a competent person in the field. How come they are sending me the letter and I am a specialist in American not African-American literature, and I am in Jordan not in America? Simple. I am a member of the Modern Language Association (MLA), and I once indicated, in a form that was sent me by an MLA group to fill my interest in reading material about African-American literature. The said university, a recipient no doubt of MLA material, read about my interest and assumed that I may be, or may know, a specialist in African-American studies.

Notice that they are not offering me or the assumed person I know the job. They are asking for people to apply. How many letters like the one I received were sent to others, you think? At least hundreds, if not thousands. What for? Why send a letter from the U.S. all the way to a person in Jordan whom they know little about? The answer is simple: they are in "search" of the right person for the job?

Is there not a lesson here for our educational institutions? Is there not a lesson here for all of our institutions? When we want to appoint someone, do we conduct a "search"? No, we do not. We place an ad, most of the time symbolically and for procedural reasons. Could not the said American university confine itself to placing an ad and save itself the trouble of the search? In the majority of cases, we do not search beyond our noses, our cliques and our buddies.

Unless our society learns to "search" by all means at its disposal for quality people (and they do exist in our society, if we look hard enough), the new era which we have entered and the new millennium, will not be much different (I'm afraid) from the old, despite whatever we say.

In view of the era we have entered, the new parliament we have elected, and the new government which we are expecting soon, we need a new approach in the way we tackle problems, a simple approach: let's "search" for the able among us to guide us. This and only this will bring about a new Jordan, even better than the good one we already have. And God bless.

With the stage set for act II, Iraq plays it cool

By G.H. Jansen

"THE OPERA isn't over until the fat lady sings," they say. But in the Iraqi-comic opera now playing on the world stage, the female lead, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, has sung repeatedly but only the first act has been played out. And the lyrics of her aria say that there is not going to be any relaxation of sanctions against Iraq, not even if Iraqi women and children are dying of starvation and illness, it seems. While the tenor, Mr. Sandy Berger, U.S. President Bill Clinton's National Security adviser, reiterates the theme that the Iraqis must stop interfering with U.N. inspectors and cooperate with the U.N./U.S. without any "understandings," "deals" or "concessions," Iraq's task is to obey.

The first act in the latest production of "Crisis in the Gulf" has come to an end with Washington proclaiming victory because U.S. inspectors ordered out of the country as "spies" have been permitted to return and resume their work on an unconditional basis.

This development could be described as a victory for the U.S. because the Iraqis had said that the inspectors of the U.N. Special Commission overseeing the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (UNSCOM) would be allowed to carry out their work only if there were no Americans on the teams. In response to this decision, the head of UNSCOM, Australian baritone Richard Butler, pulled all his inspectors out of Iraq, suspending UNSCOM's mission. The Iraqis demanded a different "mix" of nationalities on these teams and insisted that certain sensitive sites — like the offices and residences of President Saddam Hussein should be omitted from inspection. But the fact that inspections are now said to be "unconditional" would seem to mean that even such sites — said by the U.S. to number 63 — would be subject to searches by UNSCOM. Furthermore, Iraq was compelled to set aside

its demand for a time limit to be set on UNSCOM's work so that the inspection process would end with a lifting of the punitive sanctions regime imposed on the country in August 1990.

Iraq gave way because even its closest friends and allies — including Russia, France, China and the Arabs — agreed that UNSCOM had to be permitted to resume its monitoring tasks, however intrusive and suspicious its activities. Iraq's friends attempted to sweeten Iraq's retreat by making several changes in the make-up and modus operandi of UNSCOM. The inspection teams are due to be enlarged with a greater spread of nationalities, hopefully diluting the U.S. contingent, and other countries are going to be asked to contribute aircraft to fly surveillance missions now being carried out by U.S.-owned U-2 spyplanes. There is also considerable pressure on UNSCOM to take a less confrontational stance towards Iraq and do its job quickly and efficiently so that sanctions can be ended. This pressure is a very important gain for Iraq which now can see a "glimmer of light at the end of the long dark tunnel of sanctions," as Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahaf, a bass singer, put it during one of his many briefings.

There is also the promise that there may be an improvement in the terms of the oil-for-food deal to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Iraq. There is some concern, however, that improvements would be kept at a minimum because of the vengefulness of the U.S. (encouraged by Israel which was bombed by Iraq in 1991). But this can be counted a gain for Iraq as something is better than nothing, or next to nothing.

A great gain for Iraq is that Baghdad has pushed Russia from fairly passive sympathy to active support for Iraq on the Security Council. This too can be counted by all the Arabs as a positive development because they have had no influential ally since the fall of

the Soviet Union.

According to the U.S. and its ally, Britain, the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, precipitated this crisis with two objectives in mind. The urgent objective was to get rid of the inspectors promptly and for a short time so Iraq could hide documents and material related to its biological weapons programme which UNSCOM was, allegedly, on the verge of finding. And the second, long term objective was to create divisions in the international community which would enable Iraq to escape from the monitoring system once and for all.

Iraq has almost certainly failed to secure its first objective because the returned inspectors, their mandate strengthened, will be all the more determined to eliminate the country's biological weapons capability. However, Iraq has had considerable success in demolishing the lingering facade of unity in the 30-member coalition constructed by the U.S. in 1990 to drive the Iraqi army from Kuwait.

Indeed, that coalition no longer exists. The Arabs, including Kuwait, now openly question U.S. policy objectives in the region. This time round Washington failed to secure Arab acceptance of the use of military force against Iraq. It is not certain that U.S. aircraft based in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain or Turkey would be granted permission to mount attacks against Iraq from the territory of these four countries. Thus, if Washington decides to take military action, attacks may have to be launched from the aircraft carriers, Nimitz and George Washington, now deployed along with another 21 U.S. warships in the Gulf. And, finally, the U.S. is having to foot the bill for this build-up rather than Kuwait and Saudi Arabia which paid billions of dollars to Washington for the 1991 "Desert Shield" build-up and "Desert Storm" assault on Iraq as well as for subsequent deployments and strikes. Nevertheless, the U.S. continues to build up its very large force in the Gulf — including more than 300 aircraft, missiles,

Patriot anti-missile defense systems and long range B-52 bombers as well as the naval armada. All this massing of might to subdue an economically devastated, largely disarmed but still defiant Iraq.

This deployment has prompted the Iraqis to ask what this concentration is for, but so far Washington has failed to provide any answers. The answers will be given in the second and third acts which will determine whether this opera is high comedy or dark tragedy.

The Iraqis have, so far, been "playing it cool," saying that they are not looking for "victory," claiming that everyone can win, no one need lose.

But the Americans, while claiming victory, are facing defeat, whether the opera concludes with or without fireworks. The world does not want a second "Desert Storm" certainly, nor even another "Desert Strike" using Cruise missiles against specific Iraqi targets — or two. The international community is afflicted with "sanctions fatigue," with too many sanctions regimes imposed by the U.S. on too many countries (Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan, Cuba, North Korea). The Arabs and many others no longer see Iraq as a menace. Iraq has been largely "defanged." They see Israel, armed with stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and biological weaponry much larger than Iraq ever had, as a much greater threat to West Asian peace and security. Indeed, since Israel continues to refuse to implement accords with the Palestinians or cede Syrian and Lebanese land, there is a widespread feeling that the new production of "Crisis in the Gulf" is meant to deflect world attention from Israel's misbehaviour and take pressure off Washington to do something about its errant strategic ally. But, if anything, "Crisis in the Gulf" has increased such pressure and could force the U.S. and Israel to move forward on the peace front.

Legal use of 'legal'

To the Editor:

This letter relates to Rami Khouri's column "Time for a time-out on time-outs" (Jordan Times, Nov. 25, 1997).

"IT'S LEGAL," said Secretary of State Madeleine Albright when asked about Jewish settlement activities in a television interview on NBC's "Meet the Press." Interviewed on NBC's "Today show," yet another very popular local morning show, watched by millions of Americans daily, the secretary characterised Israeli settlements again as "legal." As we all know, Ms. Albright served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations long enough to acknowledge the fact that settlements are illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention and all international laws pertaining to wartime land seizures. Indeed, the 1949 Geneva Convention for the Protection of Civilian Persons prohibits the transfer of the occupier's population into occupied territory. The secretary knows that the West Bank and Gaza Strip came under Israeli occupation in 1967 as a result of war. There is an apparent shift in U.S. policy towards the illegality of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Clinton administration continues to call on Israel to take a "time-out" in its settlement policy for the sake of saving the American-sponsored peace talks and not on the basis of the principled position against Israeli activities. With his characteristic arrogance and warped sense of logic and symmetry, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declares that settlements are a "non-issue" and that the Oslo Accords, "don't include any limitation whatsoever on settlements." In other words, he reiterates his government's intention on increasing illegal

LETTERS

Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. However, what concerns me the most is not Netanyahu's rhetoric but the U.S. Secretary of State's remarks on the "legality of Jewish settlements" which attempt to shift American public opinion away from Israel's illegal activities. Millions of Americans tune in every Sunday morning to NBC's "Meet the Press" programme, and millions more tune in every day to watch NBC's "Today Show." I would ask concerned readers to voice their opinions on the secretary's remarks by e-mailing the President of the United States: <President@whitehouse.gov> or fax him at: (202) 456-2883. A couple of letters or remarks faxed or e-mailed won't make a difference, but hundreds would. The least we can do is voice our concern about the secretary's propaganda effort on behalf of Israel.

Lama Bazzari
Washington, DC

Setting an example

To the Editor:

A VERY special thank you to Mr. Leiv K. Herheim for his remarks concerning road safety in Jordan (Jordan Times, Letters, Nov. 24, 1997). As this truly shows his interest in Jordan as a country, and his genuine concern for its people as well. For whatever it's worth thank you.

I think Mr. Herheim has given us an important message, a

wake-up call if you will, about the way we behave as Jordanians when it comes to the well-being of our most precious angles, our children. I find it amazing that a foreigner shows more interest in our children, than we do. Instead of foreigners addressing such issues and fighting for the innocent children that become victims of our own ignorance, I think the time has come for us to assume our responsibilities towards the safety of our children. Adding to Mr. Herheim's observations, I have seen children put in the laps of drivers, in some cases with the child holding on to the steering wheel. As for the authorities in charge of cracking down on such violations, I believe that in order for them to succeed in implementing and enforcing this law they must act as role models and practice what they preach. Seat belts do save lives, otherwise manufacturers would be able to cut down on cost of automobiles by removing them. And yes you have paid for these seat belts why not use them.

Ayman S. Karadsheh
Madaba

Thanks from the mountains

To the Editor:

I ENJOY reading your paper and learning about your current events and what is important to you in your country. I live in the mountains of Tennessee. Some snow already. Take care and God bless.

Rod Whitehead
Tennessee, USA

مكتبة ابن بطوطة

Jill Silva, food editor of the Kansas City Star, who recently served as a judge in a roasted vs. fried turkey taste test, complained that she could not grip her pen after eating the fried meat. "It's really greasy and tasted a bit like fried chicken kept under a heat lamp too long," she said. "I think I'd stick with roasting."

Arab Gulf states warned against abandoning economic reforms

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states could undermine their economies and scare off private capital if they are tempted by an improvement in oil prices to abandon reform plans, experts have said.

"It is inevitable for Arab Gulf governments to implement the plans and strategies they have announced for restructuring their economies regardless of the developments in the crude prices," said Henry Azzam, chief economist and deputy manager of the National Commercial Bank in Saudi Arabia.

"The oil price rise in the past two years should not dissuade them from carrying out reforms as this will harm their credibility and send a discouraging message to the private sector," Mr. Azzam wrote in *Al Khaleej* daily.

"If those plans were postponed, then the region could lose the momentum in the economic change that

has become more clear recently," he said.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have announced they will carry out reforms to give the private sector a greater role in development and repair economic damage caused by weak oil prices over the past decade.

But reforms have been implemented very slowly, involving mainly the privatisation of a handful of public enterprises.

While some countries have introduced more incentives for private capital, investment laws in the GCC have remained restrictive, with foreign investors not allowed to own more than 49 per cent of most of the projects in the region.

Experts said reforms had sharply slowed down over the past two years apparently after the increase in oil prices pumped billions of dollars in additional revenue into the coffers of the

six members, which control nearly 45 per cent of the world's proven oil resources.

"I hope not," said Ihsan Abu Huleika, a well-known Saudi economist, when asked whether he thought the oil price rise would affect reforms.

"As you know, it is not a permanent phenomenon because the oil market is highly volatile and prices could dip again. GCC states should not link reforms to oil price developments but adopt them as a fixed strategy," he indicated.

According to independent estimates, the private sector accounts for less than 50 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in GCC states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

It has grown by around five per cent over the past six years and is projected to exceed half the GDP by the year 2000 if Gulf gov-

ernments honour their commitments toward reform programmes.

Mr. Azzam, citing official GCC figures, said high oil prices had already enticed member states to boost expenditure to \$82.2 billion in 1997 and nearly \$80 billion in 1996 from \$73 billion in 1995.

But the spending hike was offset by the extra oil earnings, with the budget deficit declining from nearly \$15.3 billion in 1995 to \$9.6 billion in 1996. It was projected at around \$11.8 billion in 1997.

Firm oil prices were also the main reason for a surge of nearly 9.9 per cent in the GCC's GDP in 1996.

Given a slight drop in crude prices this year, the oil sector will recede but the other sectors are forecast to grow because of higher expenditure, boosting the GDP by an estimated 4.1 per cent.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1997
By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be especially cautious about discussing financial matters. In other words, don't let an important business deal could be hurt if the wrong information got out. There could also be complications if the right information got to the wrong people. Don't let it happen.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) It's Halloween. You don't always know if what you see is what you're going to get. Keep that in mind. If you have the feeling things are not as they appear to be, don't sign your name on the dotted line. This is one lesson you do not want to learn the hard way.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There is more work than you can possibly do in eight hours. You couldn't do it all in 48! Why bother? Well, some of it's fun, that's why. You've promised more than you can deliver, again. Be responsible about it and do the best you can. Meanwhile, relax.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You should be in a fabulous mood. It's one of your favourite holidays. You have a rich fantasy life. Take bold steps to make one of those fantasies become reality. This involves love with a passionate person and a life-long commitment. Be ready when opportunity knocks.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) We might as well let the Scorpions have their big day. Halloween is in their honour, especially this year. Although you are a strong leader, you don't have to lead in every situation. Today, it'll be much easier to follow. Besides, you'll get more candy that way.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Nobody suspects that you can remember everything you hear. You're like a mouse in the corner. There will be some very interesting deals taking place at the Halloween party tonight. The secrets you learn now could be quite valuable later. Pay attention.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You could feel pressed financially. That's true even if you have a lot coming in. The lesson you're studying has to do with income more than outgo. When you learn how to create money your anxieties will fade away. Don't get a counterfeiting machine: market your talents.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is your big day. Your sign rules completion, new beginnings and Halloween! Pass along your wisdom to the others. Teach them that the choices they make now will live with them much longer than they know. Be a shining beacon of health and happiness to all around you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your work load has been increasing. It's as if the more you get done, the more other people think you can do. And they want you to do it their way! You've already done enough, in your estimation. This is pushing you beyond your limits, and that's not necessarily bad.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are decisive and sharp, and your energy level is high. Your team is working very well together. Expect lots of activity at your place tonight. You might as well have all your friends, relatives and the neighbourhood kids over. You're in the mood to party!

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is a wonderful day for fantasy. It's also a pretty good time for playing with your friends. So don't cause a problem by getting into a fight with an old enemy. Concede, gracefully. It'll be a lot easier on everybody and maintain the festive mood.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You should be feeling marvellous. You have a lot of energy, and your ability to focus is awesome. You can accomplish great things in the projects you start now. The money will be pouring in. If you don't have a booth set up for selling something, you're missing a big opportunity.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1997
By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) How will you get what you need? How much is it going to cost you? Whom do you need to talk to, and whom should you avoid? Your friends and advisors are not going to be able to make up your mind for you you're going to have to do it all by yourself.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Scorpio is your sign of partnership in business, personal and legal matters. You don't always get along, but your skills complement each other. You Scorpio friend is very powerful today. You might as well just do what you're told. Arguing will be pointless.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You'll get two or three times the workload you're usually assigned. You'll have to think work, breathe work, eat and sleep work for the next 48 hours. That's how long it takes for this condition to pass. It's your own fault, though. It's what you get for promising to do everything!

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You are feeling so good about yourself. It's because you know you're loved. How do you know? Somebody told you. It could be your true love or your kids. Maybe you even told yourself. The more love you feel, the more successful you'll be. Soak it up.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You'll be told exactly what to do and how to do it. You can still be the figurehead, but somebody else has the power. If you go along with the programme, you'll get the job accomplished. If you share the same goals, you might as well.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You are a powerhouse of energy. Your mind is soaking up information faster than you can even tell what it is. Use this superhuman intelligence will thank you for generations to come.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) A friend needs financial assistance. This may not be as awful as it first appears. It's important to stay calm, since you're the one with the money. See if you can help this person generate another source of income, instead of depending on you. Help your friend get a job.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Magic occurs when you're in a mood like this. You're in control. Take care of the people who depend on you. Be a benevolent dictator. Reassure them that you're keeping their interests firmly in mind. That will make them feel better. Then, show them the time of their lives.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your need to wrap up the projects you've been working on. Don't let them drag on until tomorrow. You are definitely going to be busy for the next few days. Your primary objective is to alleviate as much pressure as possible. Do that by completing whatever you can, right now.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is a marvellous day for meetings. Everybody is in a decisive frame of mind. There's no wavering back and forth about what project to take on next. People will either love it or hate it. This is also a good day to decide what you need to buy and what you can throw away. And you'll be having fun at the very same time!

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Go along with an older person's ideas. This does not have to be a problem. There's a better chance your suggestions will be heard if you're not being confrontational. That's not always easy for you to remember, but today it will be obvious.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Wait until the afternoon to begin your next voyage. It will be even more successful then. If you have to wait until tomorrow, that's even better. If you haven't picked your costume yet, this assignment could give you a few ideas.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

Asian reliance on M.E. oil seen rising

BEIJING (AFP) — Asia's dependence on oil imports from the Middle East will rise from 75 per cent now to 90 per cent by 2010, a senior Japanese energy researcher has said.

Kazuya Fujime, managing director of Japan's Institute of Energy Economics, warned Asian nations to build up stockpiles to cope with any cut in Middle East supplies.

He also urged them to find other supplies, develop national energy sources and make savings.

He said demand in East Asia for oil will increase by 4.4 per cent a year to reach 14.9 million barrels a day by 2010. Local production will only rise 0.6 per cent a year to six million barrels a day, over the same period.

Of the region's two main producers, China has been a net importer since 1993 and Indonesia will become an importer at the start of the next decade, Fujime said in a study for the World Petroleum Congress.

China will need 6.5 million barrels a day by 2010

while production will only be 3.9 million barrels. Indonesia will only be able to supply 1.3 million barrels of its 1.6 million barrels of daily needs.

Asia will import around 21.2 million barrels of oil a day in 2010, according to Fujime, from countries such as Mexico, the United States, the former Soviet republics or Africa. The rest will come from the Middle East.

Meanwhile, a panel of oil ministers was assured here that oil will remain crucial to U.S. economy.

The U.S. Energy Department's deputy assistant secretary for fossil energy, Robert Kripowicz, told the panel that the United States depended on imports for 50 per cent of its needs and had established a "strategic petroleum reserve" to safeguard its economy in case of future oil supply disruptions.

The United States is the world's largest user of petroleum products and Mr. Kripowicz said the oil and gas industry accounted for almost five per cent, or \$360 billion, of his country's gross output.

Catholic leaders call for Third World debt relief

VATICAN CITY (R) — Two leading Roman Catholic prelates have urged rich nations to help substantially ease or eliminate Third World debt by 2000 to show solidarity with the poor at the start of the third millennium.

The two, Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, and Archbishop Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of Honduras, spoke at a news conference on the first working day of a synod of bishops from north, central and south America and the Caribbean.

Archbishop Rodriguez, head of the Latin American Bishops Conference, also restated the Catholic Church's opposition to the U.S. economic embargo against communist Cuba.

Both Cardinal Mahony, representing the world's richest nation, and Archbishop Rodriguez, said the settlement of Third World debt had to be linked to a war on corruption.

"In Latin America we are struggling against corruption. We are convinced that the problem of the debt won't be resolved until there is a battle against corruption," Archbishop Rodriguez said.

"We hope that for the jubilee (the year 2000), we can reach a substantial easing

of this problem for the countries with the greatest debt," he added.

"We must stand in solidarity to try to resolve this issue and reach a new millennium free from the debt," Cardinal Mahony said.

"We have to find a way to limit and diminish in many cases, if we can, actually erase this debt because of the enormous impact it is having," he stressed.

Cardinal Mahony said the world had to know that much of the money borrowed in Latin America did not go to benefit ordinary people.

"It would be one thing if it went to build hospitals and schools and to improve the lot of the people. That would be a little easier to understand, but much of the money went by way of corruption," the cardinal said.

Cardinal Mahony said it was a "very cruel hoax" that many Latin American countries were using scarce resources to buy weapons.

In September, at the World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund) meeting in Hong Kong, the Vatican called on both institutions and on wealthy nations to reduce debts swiftly for developing countries, saying the poor always paid for indecision and delay.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Ill-gotten gains
- Circle part
- Spar
- about
- Bay window
- Glimpse
- Extinct bird
- 13th century document (with 24D)
- Impasse
- Take the easy way
- Imbiber
- cotla
- Social class
- Rocky peak
- Clumsy
- Commedia dell'
- Dismiss
- Interfere
- Enlarge
- Upright pref.
- Equal
- Plaid
- Command to a horse
- Khayyam
- Nobel Prize chemist
- Molt
- Aver
- Fume
- Exclamation
- Verbatim
- Ranch measure
- City in Italy
- Seep
- dire
- Mountain nymph
- Goats
- Shortly
- Thesaurus abbr.
- RBI, e.g.

DOWN

- Seal groups
- Plenty, once
- California town
- Totally
- Smell — (be suspicious)
- Accurate
- Core
- Basic meal
- spumante
- WWII plane
- Daly of television
- Skip
- Comic Bert of yore
- Grief
- New York canal
- See 17A
- Sites
- Word with head or false
- Gob
- Pant disease
- Crease
- Haute
- Against
- Trim the lawn
- Cloche
- Feed the kitty
- Crackers
- Haggard heroine
- Therefore
- "When I was —"
- Pole
- outpouring
- College subj.
- Small group
- Horse
- Wrongful act
- Pound the pot
- Take five

by Philip J. Anderson

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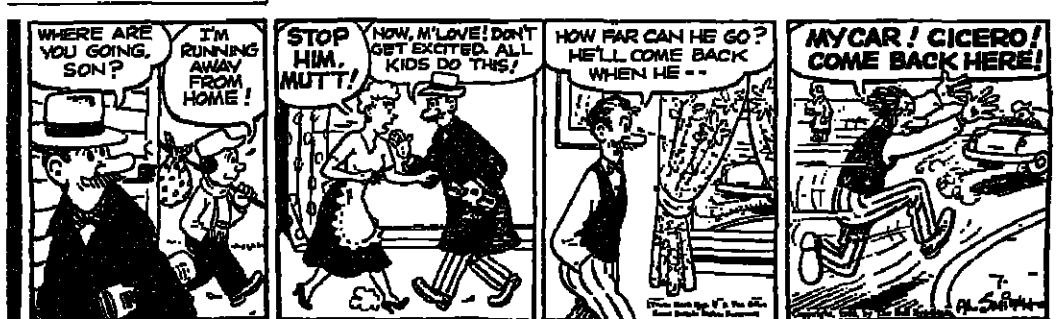
Peanuts



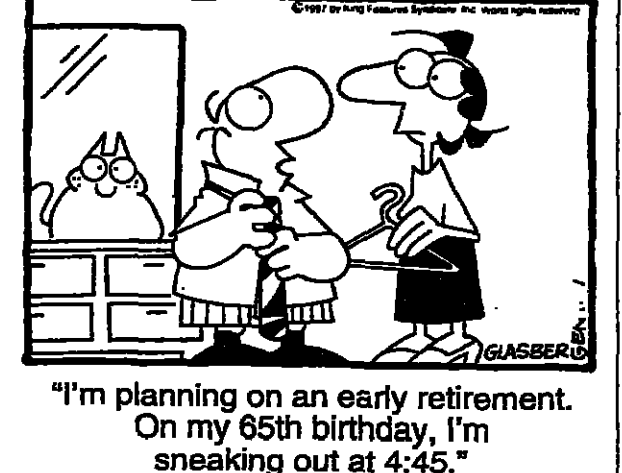
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

EVIRT

NOCOL

PINGAY

STYLIB

Print answer here: _____

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: BUMPY AISLE MAINLY NESTLE
Answer: Hard to find on a shady person — A SUNNY SMILE

Wihdat face Faisali in crucial Premier League match Friday

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Leaders Al Wihdat will face all-time rivals Al Faisali Friday in the 3rd week of the second round of the Premier League Championship.

Titleholders Al Wihdat lead the standings with 31 points after an impressive 5-0 win over Al Ahli in their last match which somewhat delighted their fans following their dismal results at the Arab Champions Cup in Tunisia last week.

Former champs Al Faisali last week took over second place from Al Ramtha after beating Al Hussein 4-2.

Friday's match is one of the most awaited by fans of the sport and the result will definitely have an impact on the overall standings of the ten-team competition.

Also Friday, Al Karmel will meet Al Jazireh with both teams having improved their standings.

Al Karmel drew 1-1 with Al Baqaa last week and had earlier upset Al Ramtha 4-1 in one of the most unexpected results so far.

Third placed Al Ramtha will meet Al Qadissieh Saturday aiming to score a win while hoping that Al Faisali lose to reclaim second place.

Al Hussein who are fourth, have a postponed match resulting from their inability to obtain permits for their army recruits to play their matches.

STANDINGS

Team	P	W	D	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
Wihdat	11	10	1	0	28	3	31
Faisali	11	8	1	2	32	11	25
Ramtha	11	7	2	2	22	13	23
Hussein*	10	6	1	3	19	15	19
Qadissieh	11	3	2	6	12	17	11
Jazireh	11	3	2	6	14	21	11
Ahli*	10	2	4	4	17	21	10
S.Hussein	11	21	2	7	10	20	8
Karmel	11	2	2	7	11	30	8
Baqaa	11	2	1	8	10	24	7

* Hussein-Ahli have a postponed match

Schedule

Faisali-Wihdat	Fri. Nov. 28	Amman Stadium
Karmel-Jazireh	Fri. Nov. 28	Hassan Stadium
Qadissieh-Ramtha	Sat. Nov. 29	Amman Stadium
Shab. Hussein-Hussein	Sat. Nov. 29	Salt Stadium
Ahli-Baqaa	Sun. Nov. 30	Amman Stadium

The Jordan Football Association solved that problem and the team will continue the rest of the matches as scheduled.

Al Hussein have a good chance to score a win against Shabab Al Hussein who have improved to 8th after a 3-2 win over Al Qadissieh.

Al Ahli who dropped to 7th last week face Al Baqaa who are now bottom of the table.

Al Wihdat remain the only unbeaten

team in the competition hoping to win the second title of the year after winning the Cup Winners Cup at the onset of the season.

Al Faisali won the Federation Shield.

The fourth title of the year — the Jordan Cup — will see Al Ramtha who knocked out Al Faisali playing the winner of Al Hussein-Al Wihdat semi-final which has not yet been scheduled.

McRae wins RAC Rally as Makinen takes title

CHELTEMHAM (AFP) — Scottish driver Colin McRae, piloting a Subaru with co-driver Nicky Grist, won the RAC rally here on Tuesday but despite his disappointment praised Finland's Tommi Makinen for pipping him for the overall title by a point — though the Finn was celebrating by going straight to bed!

Makinen, who was suffering from a bout of 'flu, succeeded in finishing sixth which he needed to do if McRae, the 1995 champion, won the rally — the Finn taking the title 63 points to 62.

"I have still got a fever so I'm going straight to bed and staying there for at least two days," Makinen said.

"I found the whole rally difficult and for me to find it difficult to get a point is incredible! That's how bad I was feeling," Makinen added.

McRae, who was winning his third RAC rally, said he was more than satisfied in winning the race after his appalling stage on Monday when he had slipped behind fellow Scot Raymond Burns.

"Of course I am disappointed not to have won the



Scotland's Colin McRae celebrates with navigator Nicky Grist (L) after winning the British RAC Rally November 25. McRae was beaten into second place of the World Championships by Finnish Tommi Makinen who only had to come in the first six to win (Reuters photo)

title but Tommi did what he had to do and you have to give him credit for that," McRae said.

"To win this rally for the third time is fantastic and coming back from our disastrous stage yesterday to nearly clinch the title was quite an achievement. However, everything else was completely out of our control," McRae added.

The 29-year-old McRae, who was winning his third successive rally and fifth of the season, came home 2 minutes and 47 seconds clear of Makinen's compatriot Juha Kankkunen with another former world champion Carlos Sainz in third.

Makinen, 33, grabbed the vital sixth place in his Mitsubishi over 1 minute and 40 seconds clear of McRae's teammate seventh placed Italian Piero Liati.

A consolation for the Scotsman was that Subaru won the constructors championship, winning eight of the 14 rounds of the championship.

However, his brother Alister was disqualified, after winning the RAC Rally two litre category class in a Volkswagen Golf, for infringing technical rules.



Chicago Bull's Dennis Rodman (91) and Seattle Supersonics' Jim McIlvaine (22) battle for a rebound during second quarter play at Key Arena (Reuters photo)

NBA RESULTS

Charlotte	90	Detroit	85
Miami	103	LA Lakers	86
San Antonio	102	Dallas	91
Seattle	91	Chicago	90
New Jersey	101	Golden State	87
Sacramento	97	Denver	93

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Italy to be seeded for World Cup

ROME (AFP) — FIFA are to give Italy one of the eight seeded slots in next month's World Cup draw, former Italian soccer chief Antonio Matarrese announced on Wednesday. Matarrese, a UEFA vice-president and former president of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), spoke to FIFA secretary general Joseph Blatter on Wednesday morning, after Blatter indicated that Italy were only one of seven candidates for three seeded places in the draw on December 4. "FIFA's secretary general assured me that there are no doubts about the fact that Italy will be seeded, whatever criteria is adopted," Matarrese said. Matarrese, along with Italian League president Franco Carraro, will be representing the FIGC at a World Cup organisers meeting next week.

Chinese heap Cup blame on coach

BEIJING (AFP) — China's official English-language newspaper Wednesday squarely blamed national coach Qi Wusheng for the country's failure to qualify for next year's World Cup finals in France, indicating he be punished. "Many explanations have been given: inexperienced players and a weak defensive line. But most important of all,

lack of a qualified chief coach severely hindered the attempt by the national team to qualify," the China Daily said. "All agreed the current chief coach of the team, Qi Wusheng, made several serious mistakes in guiding the team during several matches, which caused China to lose." The newspaper editorial called for punishment as a means of spurring better performance. "Why is the national team still ranked as a second-class Asian team after so many years? Someone must take responsibility for that," it said. The state media on November 13 published an open letter from the team apologising for letting the country down. The team finished third in Asian Group A behind Saudi Arabia and Iran, angering Chinese fans, who booed players in the losing final match at home against Kuwait.

Ronaldo suffers knee injury

STRASBOURG (AFP) — Inter Milan's Brazilian world footballer of the year Ronaldo suffered a twisted right knee during the UEFA Cup tie with Strasbourg here on Tuesday according to his club doctors. The 20-year-old Brazilian had to go off after 70 minutes during the Serie A leaders 2-0 defeat in the third round first leg tie. Doctors said that he would undergo further tests when the Italians returned to Milan on Wednesday.

Mexicans sack Milutinovic

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Mexico's Serbian born coach Bora Milutinovic was sacked by the Mexican Football Federation (FMF) here on Tuesday. Juan Jose Leano, President of the FMF, said that the decision had been unanimous despite Milutinovic 'having done a good job' in guiding Mexico to next year's World Cup finals — it would have been his fourth successive finals after he took Mexico to the 1986 quarter-finals, where they lost on penalties to Germany. Costa Rica to the last 16 in 1990 and repeated the feat with hosts United States four years later. Leano said that the FMF would probably announce his successor in three days time.

Desailly safe after Ferrari smash

MILAN (AFP) — AC Milan's French midfielder Marcel Desailly has escaped uninjured after writing off his Ferrari in a car crash. It emerged on Tuesday evening. Three weeks after Milan's other French midfielder Ibrahim Ba escaped unhurt after wrecking his Mercedes, Desailly lost control on a link road leading to the Genoa-Milan motorway on Monday night. Desailly, whose car ended up against a guard rail, said: "I was coming back from Aix en

Provence, where I have a house. It was eight o'clock in the evening, it was raining and the road was very slippery. "I was certainly not driving very fast. I was doing around 130kmh (80 mph). I hit a bump and on the slippery tarmac, I just lost it." The Ghanaian-born Frenchman, who became the first player to win two European Cup's with separate teams Marseille in 1993 and Milan in 1994, trained at Milan on Tuesday but worked out separately from the rest of the team because of a muscle problem.

Gallacher stays with Rovers to 2000

LONDON (AFP) — Scotland striker Kevin Gallacher has signed a new deal with tide-chasing Blackburn Rovers to keep him at the club until the summer of 2000. Gallacher, 31, joined Rovers from Coventry during Kenny Dalglish's reign and has this season formed a formidable striking partnership with Chris Sutton. Blackburn chief executive John Williams said: "This is the latest in a succession of renegotiations consistent with the club's present policy of consolidating the squad into the new millennium."

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144 PHILADELPHIA "1" Chris O'Donnell & Jene Hackman ... in THE CHAMBER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 634144 PHILADELPHIA "2" Charles Grodin ... in BEETHOVEN'S 2ND Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 699238 PLAZA Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in AL MASEER (Arabic) Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 677420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" Rowan Atkinson... in MR. BEAN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" SLEEP WALKERS Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only	CINEMA TEL: 679 524/31 GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in AL MASEER (Arabic) Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45	CINEMA TEL: 679 524/30 GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN NOTHING TO LOSE Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155 NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas For reservations call: 640155, 625155
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Youri Djorkaeff (R) of Inter Milan is stopped by Valerien Ismael (L) of Strasbourg who scored the second goal for his team during UEFA Cup action (Reuters photo)

UEFA Cup roundup

Strasbourg hand Inter Milan 2-0 defeat; Yorke keeps Villa alive

PARIS (AFP) — Unheralded Strasbourg look set to claim the scalp of favourites Inter Milan after handing the star-studded Italians a 2-0 defeat in Tuesday's UEFA Cup third round, first leg clash in France.

England's last survivors Aston Villa meanwhile went down 2-1 in Romania at Steaua Bucharest, Dwight Yorke scoring a potentially vital away goal, while Dutch league leaders Ajax came from two down to beat Germany's inexperienced Bochum 4-2 in Amsterdam.

Inter lost both the match and their Brazilian star Ronaldo, who limped off in the 70th minute with a twisted right knee after a challenge from his Nigerian marker Godwin Okpara.

Strasbourg, already shock conquerors of Rangers and Liverpool despite poor league form, hit the Italian league leaders with two early goals and never looked back.

"My players played a perfect match and showed their maturity. I think Inter must have been tired after their game with AC Milan on Saturday. We've still got the second leg to come so it's not over yet," Strasbourg manager Jacky Duguereperoux said.

Skipper Gerard Batiste opened the scoring after 10 minutes and his side were 2-0 up eight minutes later after a 25-yard thunderbolt from Valerien Ismael.

Later were caught completely on the hop in an error-strewn showing.

Gigi Simoni's team lacked conviction in midfield and even lacked bite up front — despite the Inter coach fielding an attacking line-up which had an extra striker in Maurizio Ganz.

"It was a rotten first half for us," Simoni said. "They played well, while we weren't really in the game. Perhaps the players were tired from the derby with AC Milan, perhaps we thought it would be easier."

Aston Villa clawed themselves out of trouble in Bucharest when Yorke scored the Midlands' first goal on their travels in the competition after Steaua had raced into a two-goal first half lead.

Villa looked to be heading out of the competition after Cristian Ciocoiu turned their defence inside out with two goals in three minutes just after the half hour, the first deflecting cruelly off the back of keeper Michael Oakes' head.

Manager Brian Little, celebrating the third anniversary of his arrival at the club as coach, looked on gloomily as his men began to stare a resounding defeat in the face.

The Romanians took the lead when Stan Collymore lost possession near the centre circle.

Munteanu swiftly fed Marius Lacatus and his cross found Ciocoiu at the far post. His volley smashed against the upright but the rebound went in off



Ajax forward Tijjani Babangida (C) fights for the ball with German Bochum defender Torsten Kracht (L) and German Bochum forward Axel Sundermann during their third round, first leg UEFA Cup soccer match in Amsterdam. Ajax won 4-2 (Reuters photo)

Oakes. Ciocoiu then struck again when, from the right by Rotariu, he leapt to fire a spectacular overhead kick flying past Oakes from close to the penalty spot.

But Trinidadian international Yorke, the subject of racist taunts along with Villa's other black players when they had inspected the stadium 24 hours earlier, had the last laugh, heading in on 54 minutes from a Savo Milošević cross.

Germany had hoped to see three sides go through to the last eight, but that looked unlikely after Bochum, in their debut season in Europe, crashed 4-2 at Ajax having shocked the runaway Dutch leaders by taking a two-goal lead through Thomas Reis and Tomasz Waldoch.

But in an amazing turnaround, Ajax blasted four goals without reply before half-time, two coming from Michael Laudrup.

Holders Schalke 04, who shocked Inter last May to lift their first European trophy, look like going through to the quarter-finals after dragging out a scoreless draw with Sporting Braga in Portugal.

Though the Portuguese pored forward in attack after attack the Germans defence held firm masterminded by veteran Olaf Thon, who went close to opening the scoring in the 17th minute, and his younger partner Thomas Linke, who it was announced by Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer on Monday will be joining the champions next season.

"I think Braga can be happy with the scoreline. It leaves things open for them in the second leg," Thon said.

"We can also be satisfied though we had our chances to score in the first-half but didn't take them. I would have preferred a 3-3 draw!" he added.

The third Bundesliga team still in contention, Karlsruhe, face a tough second

leg trip to Moscow after they could only draw 0-0 at home to Spartak Moscow.

Karlsruhe, third bottom of the Bundesliga, were unlucky when Jens Reich hit the bar from close range after nine minutes following a fine ball from Hassler and coach Winnie Schäfer said: "If that one had gone in it could all have been so different."

Lazio were left to carry the Italian flag with a fine 2-0 win at Rapid Vienna achieved courtesy of goals by Pierluigi Casiraghi in the 38th minute and Roberto Mancini, who set up the opener, just after the hour mark.

Rapid were their own worst enemies as they had Freund sent off in the 57th minute for deliberate handball. Mancini was also dismissed for a foul immediately after his goal.

Croatia Zagreb, who failed to qualify for the Champions League, went off the boil after a good start in their home leg against Atletico Madrid, coached by former Luton star Raddy Antic, and finally had to settle for a 1-1 draw.

Zagreb went ahead through a deflected effort by Edin Mujcin, whose low right-footed drive looped into the net following a Alen Petrovic cross after barely two minutes.

But Jose Luis Caminero blasted the equaliser on his left foot when he lashed home on 61 minutes just moments after Zagreb had missed a golden chance to go two up. Petrovic firing wide when it seemed easier to score.

Elsewhere, Auxerre, France's other survivors aside from Strasbourg, won 1-0 at Twente Enschede in the Netherlands.

The goal came in the second period when Yann Lachuer surged through the middle before finding Bernard Diomede, who cut in from the left to steer a low shot past keeper Sander Boschker.

SOUTHWEST ASIAN GAMES

Abu Khadijeh earns 1st gold medal for Jordan; Khalaf takes bronze in judo

Athletics team hopes to add more medals in high jump, discus

By Aileen Bannayan
in Amman and Jordan
Sports Media reporters
in Tehran

JORDAN'S MOHAMMAD Abu Khadijeh Wednesday earned the Kingdom's first gold medal when he won the final bout of the heavy-weight 91-kilogramme boxing event in which he knocked out his Syrian opponent Ahmad Shilleh in the first round at the Southwest Asian Games which conclude in Tehran, Iran Nov. 28.

Also Wednesday, Jordan's Mousa Khalaf won a bronze medal in judo's 78-kilogramme category after beating his Kyrgyz opponent and losing to Asia's third-placed and Iran's six-time champion.

"I dedicate this gold medal to His Majesty King Hussein and to all Jordanians," an ecstatic Abu Khadijeh told reporters following his win as thousands of Iranians chanted his name alongside the rest of Jordan's delegation.

On his way to the final, Abu Khadijeh had eliminated his Iranian opponent and had earlier literally knocked out his Turkmen opponent of the ring.

In the overall boxing team standings, Iran took first place, followed by Syria in second place while Tajikistan was third.

Abu Khadijeh's and Khalaf's medals brought Jordan's tally up to seven

medals — one gold, two silver and four bronze — won by the athletics, weightlifting, judo and boxing teams.

In boxing, Khalidoun Abdul Hamid and Basel Hindawi won two bronze medals in the 57 and 81 kilogrammes.

In athletics, Awwad Sreyes won the 5,000 metres silver while Tareq Najjar won the shot put bronze.

Ayed Khawaldeh had secured the Kingdom's first silver medal when he won the 54-kilogramme event in the weightlifting competition.

Khawaldeh, the only weightlifter representing Jordan, had become the only Jordanian to win three medals at July's Pan-Arab Games.

Also Wednesday, Jordan was eliminated from the fencing competition when Amer Natour, lost 15-6 to Kuwait in the quarterfinals.

A medalist at the Pan-Arab Games, Natour admitted that he sorely missed the guidance of his coach who had to return to Amman because he couldn't extend his leave from the University of Jordan.

Natour had beat Iran 5-2, Turkmenistan 5-1 and 5-1 to Kuwait, Natour was earlier eliminated from the epee competition.

Jordan's athletics team has expressed confidence as they seek to add more medals as the athletics com-

petition continues Thursday. Fakrudin Fuad hopes to win his third gold medal of the year in the high jump competition.

Fuad had won the gold at the Pan-Arab Games clearing 2.17 metres. He also won the gold at the Arab Athletics Championship in Saudi Arabia in August.

"I will hopefully win my third gold medal," a confident Fuad said after his opponents had trouble clearing 1.90 metres during practice.

Also in athletics, Najjar will compete in the discus. He had set a Jordanian record in winning the shot put bronze with a throw of 15.80 metres. His discus record stands at 51.53 metres which he set in Saudi Arabia earlier this year.

Jordan's Mu'een Taha, will take part in the 10,000 metres walk in which only five athletes will compete.

Meanwhile, Salameh Abdul Karim and Sreyes will compete in the 10,000 metres run.

After winning the silver medal in the 5,000 metres Sreyes expressed hope of winning the gold in the 10,000 metres.

Jordan has so far been eliminated from the wrestling and badminton events and the teams have already returned home.

The Kingdom was also eliminated from tennis, with Ahmad Al-Hadeed scoring his sole win over Turkmenistan in the men's singles event.

In team tennis, Jordan was easily knocked out losing to Turkmenistan, Iran and Tajikistan in the event which required at least two players.

With the team missing the country's current top tennis players, Faris and Laith Azzouni, who were unable to join the team for personal reasons, Al-Hadeed was the only player left prompting Mazen Hatanleh, the team manager, to register as player and took a heavy beating of 6-0, 6-0 in all matches.

Weightlifting, athletics and boxing — all of whom were also impressive in Beirut's Pan-Arab Games — have made up for otherwise disappointing Jordanian results at the onset of the Tehran Games in which 12 countries are competing in 17 sports events.

In Beirut, the aforementioned teams had earned five medals each while the wrestlers took four. Judo and fencing earned a medal each.

Open to men's teams only, the Nov. 19-28 Games have brought together athletes from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen, Jordan and Iran.

Jordan's 37-member delegation comprises 19 athletes competing in 8 events: Athletics, boxing, fencing, badminton, tennis, wrestling, weightlifting and judo.

The games also include

basketball, karate, table tennis, soccer, handball, taekwondo shooting and swimming.

Unable to cover air-fare, many Jordanian federations opted to stay away like equestrian, handball, basketball, volleyball, shooting and table tennis federations.

However, in an effort to increase the Kingdom's competitive chances, the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) sponsored excellent players by paying for medal-winning athletes at July's Pan-Arab Games, while the rest of the participating federations covered their own expenses.

Jordan took a total of 40 medals, including 10 gold, 8 silver and 22 bronze medals to finish fifth among the 19 participating countries gaining more gold medals in Beirut than in the past seven Pan-Arab Games altogether, and capping the best Jordanian participation since the event was first held in 1953.

Twelve medal-winners are included in the delegation including Fakrudin Fuad and Tareq Najjar (athletics), Mousa Khalaf (judo), Mohammad Abu Khadijeh, Ayman Nadi, Kamal Abdul Hamid, Khalidoun Abdul Hamid and Basel Hindawi (boxing), Abdul Hakim Abu Sneh and Ismail Sheikh (wrestling).

Ayed Khawaldeh (weightlifting), and Amer Natour (fencing).

Compagnoni likely to return to Super-G slalom wars

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN (AFP) — Deborah Compagnoni has not won a women's World Cup super-giant slalom since 1993. But that could change on Thursday when women race the event for the first time this season.

The 27-year-old claimed the 1992 Olympic gold medal in the speed specialty at Morzine, France, but two days later fell heavily in the giant slalom, tearing left knee ligaments. It was one of a series of injuries which plagued her during the early days of her career.

Since then, Compagnoni has tended to keep her distance from the Super-G, but looks to be giving the event another chance this season. Though she said in September she would concentrate on slalom and giant slalom for the 1998 Nagano Olympic run-up, the lure of World Cup points could prove a strong incentive.

Compagnoni's name features on the entry list for the Mammoth Mountain Super-G, which falls on the American Thanksgiving Day holiday.

The Thursday Super-G and Friday's second and last parallel slalom of the season complete an early week's racing for women, who are scheduled to complete a three-week North American tour next week in Canada before heading back to Europe.

Compagnoni heads the season table on 214 points thanks to blistering early-season form with two wins already this season, both in her preferred giant slalom specialty. Second on 162 is German Martina Ertl.

The Italian began the Olympic year campaign a month ago with victory in the season-opening giant slalom in Tignes, France, and followed up her success last weekend in Park City, Utah, where she headed Alexandra Meissnitzer on the GS podium. The Austrian runner-up has few

doubts about the performance of her rival. "Deborah is skiing like a god," was Meissnitzer's quick assessment. "She is the perfect skier, it will be almost impossible to catch her this season. I just have to hope that she goes out in some races, so I can have a chance."

FIFA to investigate UAE bribery allegation

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — FIFA on Wednesday urged to investigate allegations by Costa Rican referee Rodrigo Badilla that he was offered cash to help the United Arab Emirates beat Japan in a World Cup Asian zone qualifier.

Peter Velappan, general-secretary of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) who revealed the allegation,

said he was concerned about the attempted bribery. Badilla alleged he was offered \$50,000 to help UAE win the match.

The Asian football supremo said the AFC would wait for FIFA's investigation into the matter before commenting further.

Velappan said the appointment of referees, match commissioners' and

security officials for the World Cup matches was the responsibility of FIFA and this was the reason for asking the world body to investigate the allegation.

The match between UAE and Japan ended in a 1-1 draw but Japan qualified for the finals after beating Iran in a play-off. UAE failed to qualify for France 98.

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GOREN BRIDGE
WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH
ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ
Q. 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
AA 10 6 4 3 Q 9 8 2 J 10 8 AS
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?
A - You want to construct an invitational auction. Start with a probe for a major fit by bidding two clubs. Should partner respond in a major, raise to the three-level; if partner denies a major, bid two spades to show an invitational holding with five spades.
Q. 2 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
AZ C 4 3 Q K J 10 8 2 AA Q 8 4 3
The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1A Pass 20 Pass
20 What do you bid now?
A - There is no point to bidding three clubs. First, partner is unlikely to have a fit for either of your suits. Secondly, that would be a game force and your hand is not strong enough. Therefore, the only viable option is a rebid of two no trump.
Q. 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
A Void K 9 7 6 Q A Q 8 5 4 K 9 8 8
The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
10 2a* Pass Pass
10 What action do you take?
A - You have support for both unbid suits and adequate defensive values. Reopen the bidding with a double. Should partner convert to penalties, you will be in the right spot. A takeout by North to another suit will be equally delightful, since

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COMPUTER SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR
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Qualifications:
Degree in computer science, information systems management, or equivalent. Excellent knowledge and experience in the installation and maintenance of Novell and Windows NT networks. Excellent working knowledge of English and Arabic.
Candidates will be invited to a testing process. Only qualified applicants need apply. Interested persons may pick up an application from the embassy and submit it with a recent picture to the attention of the Personnel Officer.
Deadline for receiving applications is December 7, 1997.

110 go on trial for Qatar coup bid, risk execution

DOHA (AFP) — One hundred Qataris and 10 foreigners, including two Egyptians, went on trial here Wednesday for a 1996 failed coup against the emir and could face the death penalty or life in prison if convicted.

The defendants were charged with trying "to depose the emir by force and bearing arms against Qatar."

The accusations also pointed to contacts with foreign countries "to perpetrate hostile acts, divulging a Qatari military secret and incitement to assassinate the emir."

Legal sources said a conviction would carry the death sentence or life in jail. But the emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Thani, can grant a pardon or commute any sentences.

Around 70 of the defendants appeared in court. After a 40-minute session, the trial was adjourned until Feb. 11.

Some of the defendants protested that they had not been allowed to contact their families for 15 months and had been denied the right to defend themselves. The court appointed 13 lawyers for the defence and ordered the defendants to be kept in custody.

But the session was held in a relaxed atmosphere, with the defendants, all male, sipping coffee and soft drinks or chatting with family members and journalists.

The United States and Britain sent their ambassadors to observe the trial, while Russia had its charge d'affaires in court. Qatar has also invited Amnesty International to send an observer, but it was not represented on Wednesday.

Two Qatari generals and seven colonels were in the dock, along with a number of engineers, civil servants and students.

Thirty-seven Qataris are being tried in absentia, along with a Tanzanian, the two Egyptians and a royal family member, former police chief and economy minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Ben Hamad Thani.

Also among the 10 foreigners on trial are two Saudis, a Bahraini, three Palestinians and a Sri Lankan.

The trial opened against the background of tense relations between Egypt and Qatar after stiff criticism from Cairo of the Middle East economic conference which Doha hosted on Nov. 16-18.

A diplomat at Egypt's

embassy said the two Egyptians were retired generals who worked as advisers to the Qatari army.

Both of the officers were on holiday in Egypt at the time of the failed coup, the diplomat said. One of them returned, was detained for 10 days, then went back to work for two or three months, before resigning and going home.

The government charges that former emir Sheikh Khalifa Ben Hamad Thani, who was deposed by his son in 1995, instigated the coup on Feb. 19, 1996 with help from unnamed foreign countries.

The ousted emir was reconciled with his son earlier this year, but he still lives in the south of France along with the former minister on trial.

The Gulf Times newspaper said the trial was "the first of its kind to take place in Qatar — and we hope that there will never be the need for such proceedings again."

"It is to Qatar's credit that... it has told Amnesty International and the ambassadors of the five permanent members of the (U.N.) Security Council... that they are welcome to send observers," it said.

Arab meeting involving Egypt will not be held in Doha — Musa

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa on Wednesday said an Arab meeting involving Egypt will not take place next month in Doha, in the latest sign of tension between the two countries.

"There is no meeting of the Damascus Declaration countries [planned] in Qatar and there is no meeting scheduled to take place in Doha next month," Mr. Musa told reporters here.

He also declined to comment on "insults" made by Qatar against Egypt, saying that Egypt was "above that and does not want to be drawn into such calumny."

Egypt and Qatar have been locked in a bitter war

of words over the past month following criticism by Cairo over the Middle East and North Africa economic conference which Doha hosted Nov. 16-18.

The forum was boycotted by most Arab countries, including regional power brokers Egypt and Saudi Arabia, because of Israel's participation.

Qatar linked Egypt's boycott of the forum to allegations of Egyptian involvement in the 1996 failed bid to topple the government in Doha.

The row gained in intensity over the weekend with Qatar charging that Egypt was now pressuring Arab countries to boycott a meeting of the Damascus

Declaration countries scheduled to take place in Doha in December.

The group consists of the six Arab Gulf monarchies, Syria and Egypt, who were united in opposing Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

A Gulf diplomat said the meeting had been postponed until late December because of the Qatar-Egypt row, prompting Doha to deny any re-scheduling.

"Qatar has issued invitations and consultations are now underway to set a date for the meeting," Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Fawaz Ben Ahmad Attiya said on Monday.

Somali faction leaders agree on provisional government

CAIRO (AFP) — Somali warlords have reached an agreement here to set up an interim government for their strife-torn country and could sign a formal pact later this week, participants at the meeting said Wednesday.

The rival factions moved out late Tuesday from a five-star Cairo hotel where they have been meeting since Nov. 12 and into an Egyptian armed forces building to hammer out their agreement away from media attention, the sources said.

Huddled together at the undisclosed location for reconciliation talks were representatives of the 26-faction Somali National Salvation Council (NSC) and key warlords Hussein Mohammad Aided of the United Somali Congress/Somali Alliance (USC/NSA) and Ali Mahdi Mohammad of the NSC-allied Somali Salvation Alliance.

"The factions agree to set up an interim government, a 13-member presidential council, the creation of a parliament and a legal system," one source said.

"They are now meeting to fine-tune this agreement and could sign a formal pact Saturday or Sunday at the end of their closed-door discussions," said the source who declined to be named.

But the factions have not yet decided on a date and venue for a broader

reconciliation meeting during which a president for a united Somalia will be elected, the sources said.

The NSC has called for a broader reconciliation meeting to take place later this year in the north-eastern Somali town of Bossaso but Mr. Aided, who rules over the south of the Somali capital Mogadishu, wanted the forum to take place on his turf, they said.

"A compromise formula to hold the reconciliation meeting in Cairo has been put forth by some of the factions," one source said.

Egypt, in close cooperation with the Cairo-based Arab League, sponsored the reconciliation meeting which opened here on Nov. 12 and said it was willing to do everything possible to make the Cairo meeting a success.

According to the sources here, the Somali leaders agreed in Cairo that a president would be chosen at the broader reconciliation talks from within the Hawiya tribe.

Mr. Aided and Mr. Ali Mahdi are from the Hawiya tribal group, which comprised such tribes as the Abigal, Habargard, Morhedda, Douil and Gal Gaal.

The prime minister would be chosen from the Darud tribe which lives in southern and northern Somalia while the parliamentary speaker would

be elected from the southern Rahawin tribe, the sources said.

Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid expressed his satisfaction and optimism that a solution to restore peace and stability in Somalia was near.

"Proposals are being discussed by the Somali factions concerning the formation of a government and for the first time we feel there are serious efforts being made to put an end to the hardships of the Somali people," Mr. Abdul Meguid said.

Somalia has been without a government since the overthrow of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991 and the country has been ruled by warlords for the past six years.

At the start of their talks in Cairo the current chairman of the NSC, Adam Abdullah Nur, said: "We have become the laughing stock in the eyes of the whole world. Let us come back to our senses."

Mr. Aided, who considered himself the head of a self-styled interim government, agreed that all Somali factions were "united in the common objective that this time there must be a solution to our differences."

Mr. Aided and Mr. Ali Mahdi had met in Cairo in May and agreed to work together for peace in Somalia. The NSC was formed in January.



ANCIENT SARCOPHAGI IN BEIRUT: Twenty seven Anthropoid Sarcophagi from the 5th Century BC displayed at Beirut's National Museum on Wednesday. The museum, which used to be a sniper position during the 1975-90 civil war, reopened after 22 years of closure and a \$3 million reconstruction programme (Reuters photo)

Israel threatens to force-feed prisoner on hunger strike — rights worker

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Israeli prison officials have threatened to force-feed a Palestinian prisoner who has been on hunger strike for 36 days if she continues to refuse food, a Palestinian rights worker said Wednesday.

But in an open letter printed in the Palestinian daily Al Quds, Itaf Elayan vowed: "I will continue my strike and starvation until I gain my freedom or death."

Eissa Qaraqeh, who visited Ms. Elayan in Israel's Ramleh prison hospital with a group of Palestinian officials on Tuesday, said hospital officials had threatened to force-feed Ms. Elayan milk when her strike reaches 40 days.

"We warn them not to do this because it will threaten her life," Mr. Qaraqeh, who heads the prisoners' rights

group Prisoners Club in the West Bank town of Bethlehem, told AFP.

He pointed to the case of Ali Al Jassari, a hunger-striking Palestinian prisoner who choked to death in 1982 when Israeli officials force-fed him milk through his nose.

Ms. Elayan, 35, who has been on strike since her arrest on Oct. 21, has lost 14 kilograms and is kept handcuffed to her hospital bed, Mr. Qaraqeh said.

Ms. Elayan accepted to stop her strike if the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) won an official guarantee from Israel that her administrative detention would not be renewed when its three-month period ends, Mr. Qaraqeh said.

An Israeli military court on Monday turned down

Ms. Elayan's appeal against her detention.

In her open letter, which was originally written in both English and Hebrew, Ms. Elayan said she "did not expect fair treatment" by Israeli courts and condemned Israel's policies of administrative detention.

Under administrative detention rules, Israeli security officials can renew imprisonment indefinitely without producing evidence or charges or calling a trial, saying the prisoner represents a "threat to security."

"I have known from the beginning I cannot get justice from Israeli courts as long as they rely on the claims of the Shin Bet," Israel's internal intelligence agency, which determines if a Palestinian is a "security threat," Ms. Elayan said.

"The day of the court rul-

ing, a Shin Bet agent told me, 'We have the courts in our back pocket,'" she wrote.

Ms. Elayan, a member of Islamic Jihad group, was arrested by Israeli troops as she drove from Bethlehem to Arab east Jerusalem on Oct. 21 in a general crackdown against Islamists launched in October.

She had already served nine years in prison for activities with Jihad but was freed in February in a general release of 30 women prisoners called for under self-rule accords between Israel and the Palestinians.

Israel currently holds some 880 Palestinians in administrative detention, most of them arrested in the recent crackdown, although some have been in detention for up to five years.

Annan seeks ways to rescue U.N. from bankruptcy

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked for advice on Tuesday on rescuing the United Nations from dire financial straits after the U.S. Congress recently dashed hopes that Washington would soon pay most of its hefty arrears.

"We will end the year with a negative cash balance in the regular budget of approximately \$200 million," he said.

At the same time, the organisation would owe some \$800 million to countries that provide troops and equipment for peacekeeping operations, he told a high-level working group on the financial situation of the world body.

"This recurrent situation is caused by certain member states who do not pay their dues to the organisation in full and on time," Mr. Annan said.

The organisation's financial situation was "reaching a new level of seriousness," he said, referring to the approximately \$2.2 billion owed by U.N. members in budget arrears and for peacekeeping operations, including about \$1.3 billion by the U.S.

Garang assures Egypt SPLA to pursue talks, wants Sudan united

CAIRO (R) — The leader of Sudan's main rebel group has assured Egypt that it is pursuing negotiations with Khartoum and wants to keep Sudan united.

Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) leader John Garang held talks late on Tuesday with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, in his first visit to Egypt since the Sudanese government's group opposes came to power in 1989.

Col. Garang's meeting was intended to brief Egypt, Sudan's neighbour to the north, after the rebels' first peace talks in three years with Khartoum under the auspices of a group of African countries called the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The talks ended in Nairobi this month.

The SPLA had said at the talks it wanted a confederacy of southern and northern states. Khartoum wanted a federation.

Asked if Col. Garang expected war to continue, Mr. Musa told reporters: "He was talking about a negotiating process, and not war."

Asked if Egypt was concerned that the SPLA wanted to set up an independent southern state, Mr. Musa said: "That is not what Mr. Garang has assured me. He was talking about the future of Sudan through a process of negotiations according to the basic guidelines as agreed within the framework of IGAD."

"He did not speak of secession, he spoke of a united Sudan."

Col. Garang was surrounded by a tight cordon of Egyptian security officials before and after the meeting with Mr. Musa and did not speak to reporters.

President Hosni Mubarak had invited Col. Garang to visit Egypt. He arrived in Cairo on Monday.

Egypt has an interest in Sudanese affairs as its neighbour to the north. They share the waters of the River Nile.

Col. Garang is also chairman of the SPLA's political wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

An SPLA official said the group was seeking Egypt's advice, not material support. "Egypt can talk to both parties, whether the [Sudanese] government, or the northern

opposition or the SPLM," Deng Alor, the secretary for foreign relations, told Reuters.

He said Egypt could help "without getting directly involved in the negotiations. We are asking for a political intervention in terms of advice. We are not asking for material support."

An SPLM and SPLA statement said on Tuesday the visit was aimed at creating better understanding in the Arab and Islamic worlds of their objectives and those of the national democratic alliance, an umbrella group for the southern rebels and rebels fighting Khartoum in the northeast.

Col. Garang's trip follows signs that Egypt and Sudan's government are willing to improve ties. President Mubarak and Sudan First Vice-President Lieutenant-General Zubeir Mohammad Saleh met in Cairo in October.

They were Egypt's first talks with a high-ranking Sudanese official since ties between Sudan and Egypt deteriorated after Cairo charged Khartoum with having a role in an attempt to kill Mr. Mubarak in 1995 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Two-year waiting list for 'England's Rose'

LONDON (AFP) — A rose named after Diana, Princess of Wales, has proved so popular that buyers now face a two-year waiting list, the Times newspaper said Wednesday. The white flower was named after the princess last year to raise funds for the British Lung Foundation. Diana, who was killed in a car crash in Paris on Aug. 31 aged 36, was described as "England's Rose" in an adaptation of pop singer Elton John's hit "Candle in the Wind," which he sang at her funeral.

Love is more important than work — Streisand

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Singer/actress Barbara Streisand says love is becoming more important than work and that retirement may be the right move. "I think a lot of my work was a substitute for not having love," Streisand told reporters. Everything changed, apparently, when she fell for fellow actor James Brolin. "I was in bliss, in heaven. I still am, by the way," she said. "I just don't feel very ambitious. Maybe I'm sort of moving toward retirement." So what's left for Streisand, whose latest record is the top seller in the United States? "To tell you the truth, I'd like to write a book. I would like to set the record straight. I like that because I can do it anywhere. I can be with him [Brolin] and do that."

Barbie to undergo cosmetic surgery

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Over the hill as she approaches 40, the Barbie doll is to undergo cosmetic surgery. According to Kim Manos, a spokeswoman for the California-based Mattel toy company, beginning in 1998 Barbie will have a smaller bust, larger dimensions and thinner hips. In addition to having a more realistic body, the new Barbie will have a new face — her mouth will be closed, her eyes less made up and her nose smaller. This Barbie will be the latest of dozens of models of the doll, available in blond, brunette and red-headed varieties in various professions from veterinarian to dentist to schoolteacher.

Castro picks Jarre for Cuban anniversary concert in '98

PARIS (AFP) — French composer-performer Jean-Michel Jarre says President Fidel Castro has asked him to organise a concert marking the 40th anniversary of the Cuban revolution late next year. Jarre told AFP this week that he would be meeting the Cuban leader in February for talks about the big, open-air Havana concert to be held Dec. 31, 1998 as the high-point of the anniversary celebration. "The BBC plans a television film on the preparations for this big concert which I'm excited about," he said.

Beatles EP is rarest disc in France

PARIS (AFP) — An early extended-play record by the Beatles is the rarest disc in France, not for its content but its cover, the monthly Jukebox Magazine reported this month, pricing it at \$3,500. The record, containing the early hits "From Me to You," "Ask Me Why," "I Saw Her Standing There" and "Please Please Me" has a cover produced only for the French market. It shows the Fab Four eating sandwiches in mock French gear, with George Harrison wearing a gendarme's kepi. Ringo Starr a Napoleon-style hat, Paul McCartney a beret and John Lennon a cap. The 45 r.p.m. disc is way ahead of the next most valuable, Elvis Presley's "Treat Me Nice" and "Jailhouse Rock," which are quoted at \$1,400 each.